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FRANCIS 1ST

King of France

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THE

COURT AND REIGN

OF

FRANCIS THE FIRST,

King of France.

BY MISS PARDOE.

AUTHOR OF "LOUIS XIV." "THE CITY OF THE SULTAN," ETC.

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PREFACE.

In attempting a record of the Court and Reign of Francis I, I did not for a moment seek to blind myself to the extreme difficulty of the task which I was about to undertake. The successor of Louis XII. has been so universally quoted as the most chivalrous Monarch who ever filled an European throne, that those who are only superficially acquainted with his history cannot fail to anticipate a succession of brilliant actions, generous self-sacrifices, refined gallantries, and noble feats of arms. Time and truth have, however, alike tended to place his character in a less elevated point of view; and the truth may well be said to have been born of time, for it is only of late years that any French historian has been permitted to allow that a sovereign of France could err.

Who, that is acquainted with the anecdote, can have forgotten the caution given by the Cardinal de Richelieu to an honest and conscientious chronicler, whose zeal had betrayed him into sundry animadversions on a crowned head long laid in the royal mausoleum of St. Denis?

"Sir;" said the minister sternly to the scholar, whom he had summoned to his presence; "you must revise your work. You have been guilty of treason; you have dared to vilify a king."

"I have only recorded well-authenticated facts, your Eminence."

"Perhaps so; but those facts were not your property. The person and fame of a monarch are alike sacred."

"*Monseigneur* will permit me to remind him that Louis XI. has been dead two centuries."

"And what of that, Sir?" retorted the Cardinal sharply; "Understand that it is treason to discuss the actions of a king who has only been dead two centuries."

Upon the principle here educed, most of the ancient French historians appear to have scrupulously acted; and thus it is only by a reference to the more confidential records and correspondence of the period, that a modern writer can hope to arrive at a just estimate of the character and motives of the sovereign whom he seeks to portray "in his habit as he lived."

There can be little doubt that much of the *prestige* which attaches to the name of Francis I. may be attributed to this circumstance. To the great mass of readers, alike French and English, he is necessarily known only through the medium of the old and well-tutored chroniclers, or rather, through the modern histories which have been compiled exclusively upon their authority; and thus, thanks to the timid and time-serving policy of those writers, the "divinity that doth hedge a king" has protected his renown throughout the lapse of centuries. For this impunity Francis I. is consequently mainly indebted to the scarcity of familiar chronicles during an age in which, the whole of Europe being almost perpetually in a state of warfare, few cared to register the mere domestic events of the period. Fortunately, however, for the after-labourers in the same vineyard, the love of court-gossipry was not altogether extinct, and thus some glimpses are afforded of the man as well as of the monarch.

It was with the witty and accomplished Marguerite de Valois, his sister, that the taste originated of perpetuating by the pen the current of passing circumstances; and it is to her example that posterity is indebted for that courtly *cacoethes scribendi* by which the annals of subsequent reigns have been so greatly enriched.

In this paucity of *authentic* detail has consisted, as I was aware that it must do, the great difficulty of my task; but, as I resolved not to insert a single incident into the Work for which I had not competent authority, the court scenes scattered through the following pages may all be accepted as facts; and the reader will be enabled from them to form his own estimate of the claim which Francis I. could arrogate to himself of being considered as the chivalric monarch *par excellence*. The glorious day of Marignano saw the rising, and that of Pavia the setting of his fame as a soldier; so true it is that the prowess of the man was shamed by that of the boy. The early and unregretted death of one of his neglected queens, and the heart-broken endurance of the other, contrasted with the unbounded influence of his first favourite, and the insolent arrogance of his second, will sufficiently demonstrate his character as a husband. His open and illegal oppression of an over-taxed and suffering people, to satisfy the cravings of an extortionate and licentious court, will suffice to disclose his value as a monarch; while the reckless indifference with which he falsified his political pledges, abandoned his allies in their extremity in order to further his own interests, and sacrificed the welfare of his kingdom, and the safety of his armies, to his own puerile vanity, will complete a picture by no means calculated to elicit one regret that his reign was not prolonged.

Despite this drawback, however, the period was one of great and absorbing interest. The fierce and continual struggle for power between Francis and Charles V; the well-

earned renown of the several generals on both sides; the names of the Connétable-Duke de Bourbon, Bayard, Pescara, Da Leyva, Doria, Gaston de Foix, Lautrec, and a host of others equally brave; the bright galaxy of beauty which adorned the court; the fair and gentle Madame de Châteaubriand, the haughty and voluptuous Duchess d'Etampes, the magnificent Diane of Poitiers, the mature, but still attractive, Louise de Savoie, the strong-minded and intellectual Marguerite de Valois, and the beautiful Catherine de' Medici; all combine to invest the age with a charm and a romance totally independent of the personal character of the monarch; while the fact of its having been the period of the mission of LUTHER, and the crowning work of the REFORMATION, suffices of itself to render it the greatest landmark on the whole highway of history.

Never, perhaps, did the reign of any European sovereign present so many, and such varying phases. A contest for empire, a captive monarch, a female regency, and a religious war; the poisoned bowl and the burning pile alike doing their work of death amid scenes of uncalculating splendour and unbridled dissipation; the atrocities of bigotry and intolerance, blent with the most unblushing licentiousness and the most undisguised profligacy;—such are the materials offered to the student by the times of Francis I.

Here, as was the case in a former Work, I have commenced my volumes by a brief glance at the conclusion of the previous reign; and, although censured by one of my critics upon that occasion for the introduction of retrospective matter, I have in this instance advisedly pursued the same system, from a conviction that the book must fall into the hands of many individuals, who, from want of time or opportunity, must necessarily be unacquainted with the précise position of the French nation on the accession of Francis I. To the historical student this preliminary sketch will be, of

course, supererogatory; but as this is not a period at which any author can feel justified in writing only for a class, I believe that a succinct narrative of preceding events will tend to render the Work more generally acceptable; and I have, consequently, not suffered myself to be deterred from acting upon that conviction. The scholar will therefore forgive me, if, in seeking to augment the gratification of the less learned reader, I have dwelt for a time upon persons and events which, although living and occurring before he ascended the French throne, were destined to exert a powerful influence over the court and reign of Francis himself.

THE SHRUBBERY, NORTHFLEET, KENT,
August, 1849.

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CHAPTER I.

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THE COURT AND REIGN OF FRANCIS THE FIRST.

CHAPTER I.

In the person of Louis XII. of France expired the elder branch of the House of Orleans. Only three months subsequent to his nuptials with the young and beautiful Mary of England, (the sister of Henry VIII,) his third wife, he was seized with fever and dysentery at the palace of Les Tournelles in Paris; and breathed his last in the seventeenth year of his reign and the fifty-fourth of his age, leaving the vacant throne to Francis, Comte d'Angoulême, the husband of his daughter Claude.

The extreme personal beauty of this prince, combined with his fearless and engaging qualities, his eloquence, courtliness of demeanour, and unbounded liberality, dazzled alike the courtiers and the people; and the dying king was probably the only individual in the nation who had reflected with misgiving upon the possible, and indeed inevitable, results of the uncalculating profusion and ungovernable ambition of his successor. In himself a model of integrity, and well deserving the title of

the Father of his People, from his constant and zealous watchfulness over the interests of his subjects, he could not witness without anxiety the brilliant but dangerous qualities of the young Count; and it was consequently with earnestness and care, that he applied himself before his death to the execution of such public measures as might at least tend to mitigate, even if they could not altogether avert, the evils which he deprecated. Although occasionally the dupe of his own kindheartedness and the treachery of his neighbours, Louis XII. never lost his confidence in human nature; and constantly sought to remedy rather than to revenge the wrongs to which he was subjected by others; while, carrying his prudence to an extreme which was on many occasions stigmatized by the young and inconsiderate with the name of penuriousness, he was accustomed, when this fact was hinted to him, to reply that "the justice of a monarch should teach him to render to every one his due, rather than to suffer his generosity to induce him to display too great a profusion." It was therefore natural that the opposite qualities, which he early discovered in his son-in-law, should cause him to look with distrust into the future. "*Ce gros garçon nous gâtera tout;*" he was wont to exclaim whenever any instance of the improvidence of Francis was forced upon him; but not even the most serious of his delinquencies sufficed to diminish his affection, or to excite his anger towards the offender.

Moreover, it is certain that if Francis I. became not only a chivalric, but also, for the age in which he lived, an accomplished sovereign, his predecessor may nevertheless be justly styled the Father of letters in France;

learning having been greatly encouraged during his reign, and learned men especially honoured. Cicero was his favourite author among the ancients; and his collection of autographs was of considerable extent and value. He employed many Italian scholars at his court and in the public offices; and his directions to his judges were stringent, that they should upon all occasions decide such causes as came before them according to the dictates of their conscience; and utterly disregard, under every circumstance, even any orders to the contrary which might be wrung from himself during the progress of the proceedings. He also discouraged, in so far as he found it possible, the inordinate taste of his nobility for costly studs and extravagant establishments of hounds; declaring that, like Actæon, they were devoured by their dogs and horses. Nevertheless, he was accomplished in all feats of joust and tournay; and so brave in the field, that upon one occasion, when his immediate attendants, who considered their own lives endangered by his impetuosity, ventured to expostulate with him, and besought him not to expose his sacred person with so little precaution, he replied disdainfully: "Let all who are afraid stand behind me!"

Neither would he, however great the provocation, ever suffer himself to be betrayed into an undue intemperance of speech or bearing, by which his kingly dignity might be compromised; and to such an extent did he carry this difficult self-government, that when, during the wars of Italy, d'Alviano, the general of the Venetian army, was brought before him a captive, and replied to his courteous and considerate greeting with an insolence

which overpassed all bounds, Louis magnanimously controlled every symptom of indignation, and contented himself with directing his removal to the quarters which had been assigned to the other prisoners; simply remarking to those about him, as the arrogant soldier was led away: "I have done well to dismiss him, as I might have lost my temper, which I should have regretted. I have conquered him; and it is no less essential that I should learn to conquer myself."

No wonder then, that when he expired, the watchmen of Paris announced the fatal event to the inhabitants of the city in these touching words: "Frenchmen! we declare to you the most fatal news that you have ever heard. The good King Louis, the Father of his People, is dead! Pray to God for the repose of his soul."

The greatest blot which rests upon the memory of Louis XII. is his repudiation of his first wife, the unfortunate Jeanne de France, daughter of Louis XI, for the purpose of marrying Anne de Bretagne,[1] the widow of Charles VIII; and even in this act there are extenuating points. Compelled by the last-named monarch to affiance himself while yet a mere youth, and Duke d'Orleans, to Jeanne; and subsequently to complete an alliance which was repugnant to him, when he

[1] Anne de Montfort, Duchesse de Bretagne, was the daughter and heiress of Duke François II. Born in 1476, she married, in 1491, Charles VIII. king of France, and governed the kingdom during his expedition in Italy. On his death, she became the wife of Louis XII, over whom she exercised extraordinary influence. She was the first queen who had a separate body-guard; and also the first who adopted black as mourning, white having previously been the conventional colour. She died in 1514.

had already bestowed his affections elsewhere, he had the additional mortification of seeing himself united to a princess deformed in person, and totally deficient in beauty; although her meekness of temper and gentleness of disposition might perhaps have ultimately reconciled him to this fact, had he been heart-free at the period of his marriage; but with his imagination full of the splendid beauty, and courtly fascinations of the heiress of Brittany, his dislike to his enforced bride soon grew into disgust.

Unfortunately for the timid and neglected duchess, Louis had been a guest at the court of Duke François at a period anterior to their union; when Anne, although also affianced to the Archduke Maximilian of Austria, whom she had never seen, was in the first bloom of her maidenly beauty. As yet fettered by no definitive ties (for she was aware that her marriage treaty could be annulled as readily as it had been contracted), she was by no means insensible to the evident passion of the gallant and handsome Duke d'Orleans; and it was, consequently, with increased irritation and chagrin that he saw himself unable to profit by a preference which would have secured his happiness.

The Dauphin, afterwards Charles VIII, had been, in his turn, at the age of thirteen years, betrothed to Marguerite of Austria,[1] the daughter of Maximilian, after his hand

[1] Marguerite d'Autriche was the daughter of the Emperor Maximilian and Mary of Burgundy, and was born at Ghent, in 1480. Affianced to the Dauphin (Charles VIII.), and subsequently sent back to the court of her father, she was again betrothed, in the year 1497, to the Infant John, son of Ferdinand the Catholic and Isabella; and in 1508, after the death of Don John, she married Philibert le Beau, Duke of Savoy, whom she lost in 1512; and who

had been successively declined by the Princess Marie and Elizabeth of England; and powerless and timid as he was, he revolted at the idea of being thus fettered by an engagement to a child who had scarcely entered her fourth year. According to the command of the king his father, Charles had been reared in the most perfect retirement, in the fortress-palace of Amboise, under the united guardianship of Madame Anne de France, his elder sister, and the Sire de Beaujeu,[1] her husband. The feeble health of the young prince, who was very delicate, and of slight frame, but gentle and kind in disposition, was the plausible pretext of Louis for thus secluding him from the world, and maintaining him in profound ignorance of all public affairs; the ferocious and jealous monarch remembering, in all probability, that the example of filial turpitude which he had himself exhibited, might, should he suffer the physical and mental strength of his son to attain their just dimensions, be followed in the person of the Dauphin.

Thus Louis XI. had found it difficult to secure such a wife for the young prince as he deemed worthy to share the throne of France; and it was not without considerable difficulty that Maximilian had at length been induced to grant to him the hand of his infant daughter, who was to remain under the immediate guardianship of the queen until she should attain a marriageable age.

The apparently profound indifference with which

left her, as her first husband had done, a childless widow. Her father appointed her governante of the Low Countries; and she ultimately died at Malines, in 1530.

[1] Pierre de Bourbon, Constable of France.

Charles went through the ceremony of his betrothal, had, however, a deeper source than was suspected by those around him; for he also, although only by report, had suffered his boyish fancy to become captivated by the charms of Anne de Bretagne. Again and again did he question his cousin d'Orleans, and M. de la Tremouille,[1] by whom he had been accompanied to the Court of Brittany, of all they had seen and heard in that brilliant circle; constantly, but as if unconsciously, directing their reminiscences to the young duchess, and crowding his imagination with scenes of pageantry and pleasure in which she was always the most prominent object. To him, debarred as he was from all the pastimes suited to his age and rank, the bare outline of such festivities would have been attractive; but blent as they thus were with the image of the beautiful young heiress, they were the greatest luxury of his dull and weary existence. No

[1] Louis, Sire de la Tremouille, prince de Talmont, and Vicomte de Thouars, born in 1460, was the representative of an ancient and illustrious family of Poitou; and acquired, by his talents and courage, the appointment of general-in-chief of the army of Charles VIII. against François II. Duke of Brittany. He achieved a splendid victory over the enemy at St. Aubin-de-Cormier, in 1488, and made prisoners of both the Duke d'Orleans, afterwards Louis XII, and the Prince of Orange. He also contributed, in a great degree, to the reunion between the two countries, by facilitating the marriage of the Duchess Anne and Charles. His services were rewarded by the post of first-chamberlain to the king, and the lieutenancy of Poitou, Anjou, Angoumais, Aunis, and the Marches of Brittany. Appointed by Louis XII. to the command of his armies in Italy, he effected the conquest of Lombardy, and was made Governor of Burgundy and Admiral of Guienne (1502), and subsequently of Brittany also. Worsted by the Swiss at Novara in 1513, he revenged his defeat upon them at Marignano, at the fearful price, however, of his only son; and was ultimately killed at the battle of Pavia in 1525.

wonder, then, that after the death of his father, who had confided the government of the kingdom during his minority to his sister and guardian, Madame de Beaujeu, he soon began to cherish hopes which had hitherto seemed more than chimerical.

Other, and more immediate matters of interest, however, in some degree withdrew the attention of the young monarch from this cherished secret. Madame Anne de France, who had hitherto preserved her purity of heart and rigid sense of morality, without one backsliding, even in thought, had been unable to resist the manly graces of the Duke d'Orleans, and had even permitted him to see the hold which he had obtained upon her affections, flattering herself that the attachment was reciprocal; but Louis, warned by the Count de Dunois not to allow himself to be dazzled by the blandishments of his royal sister-in-law, who was only anxious to enslave his feelings in order to divert him from prosecuting his claim to the regency after the demise of Louis XI.—a warning which was overheard by Madame de Beaujeu, and never afterwards forgotten—caused the young duke to withdraw, with marked coldness, from her advances; and converted a fond woman into an implacable enemy. When, therefore, Louis d'Orleans, who had taken up arms in support of the right which he claimed as first prince of the blood, to govern the kingdom during the minority of Charles, was defeated and captured at St. Aubin, in Brittany, by the Sire de la Tremouille; remembering only the slight which had been offered to her, and anxious to revenge, under cover of political expediency, the affront which she had sustained, she caused him to

be confined in the prison-tower of Bourges, where, during three long and weary years, he was treated with the greatest harshness and indignity. At the termination of this period, however, his wife, whom even his neglect and coldness had failed to wean from the deep and earnest affection which she bore him, threw herself at the feet of the young king, her brother, and besought him, in the most heart-touching terms, to restore the duke to liberty. Her tears moved Charles, who had always felt a strong affection for his gallant relative; yet for a while he remained irresolute. The period at which his sister's control was legally to cease had already passed away; but, although by the death of her husband's brother, Anne de France had become Duchess de Bourbon, she did not appear disposed to relinquish her authority; and Charles had never ventured to oppose her will. The tears and entreaties of the unhappy Jeanne, however, ultimately overcame his constitutional timidity, although not so thoroughly as to induce him to give a public order for the liberation of the duke; for he was so well aware of the inflexible hatred which his elder sister bore towards the captive, that he had not courage to contend against the remonstrances which he was conscious must ensue from such a course. In order to escape the watchfulness of Madame de Bourbon, therefore, he affected to set forth upon a hunting party; and, directing his course towards Bourges, he sent forward two of his chamberlains to liberate the unwhile rebel.

Anne, deeply wounded by this sudden assumption of authority on the part of her late ward, at once withdrew herself from all share in the government, and assumed

towards the Duke d'Orleans an attitude of haughty animosity, which was as idle as it was innoxious.

Anxious to liberate himself from the trammels which had been cast about him, Charles lost no time in causing the young Princess Marguerite, his affianced bride, to be reconducted to Flanders, with great honour indeed, and attended by a magnificent retinue; but this parade of respect did not reconcile the pride of the mortified girl to so degrading a dismissal, nor calm the anger of her justly irritated father. The resentment of Maximilian was, however, of slight importance to France; and, consequently, the prospect of his commencing a war in order to revenge his wounded honour, did not induce Charles to renounce his hopes of a marriage upon which his heart had long been fixed; and which, moreover, promised to be so advantageous to the nation. Dunois, De la Tremouille, De Commines,[1] and all the principal advisers of Louis d'Orleans, had incurred the disgrace of Madame de Beaujeu, and sought to gain the favour of the young king by forwarding his union with Anne; which was rendered the more desirable from the fact

[1] Philippe de la Clite, Sire de Commines, was born in 1445, and passed his youth at the court of Charles the Bold, whose service he abandoned for that of Louis XI. in 1472. His new master made him a counsellor, chamberlain, and seneschal of Poitiers, and admitted him to the limited circle of his intimate advisers. At the death of Louis XI. he was appointed a member of the council of regency; but, being accused of favouring the faction of the Duke d'Orleans, he was confined by Anne de Beaujeu in the castle of Loches. After having undergone two years of captivity, he was employed by the court in several negotiations; and died in 1509, at the age of sixty-four. His "Mémoires pour l'Histoire de Louis XI. et de Charles VIII." obtained for him the appellation of the French Tacitus.

that her father and younger sister being dead, she had become sole heiress of the noble duchy of Brittany, which would thus be reunited to the crown of France.

Their chief difficulty lay, however, with the young duchess herself. Pretexting her betrothal to Maximilian, and voluntarily overlooking the fact that, after having espoused her by proxy, he had never made any effort to remove the obstacles which had prevented their definitive union; and that his age, habits, and temper were, moreover, in complete discordance with her own; she affected to cover her distaste to the alliance now offered to her, by asserting her determination to fulfil the pledge that she had given. But Anne was ambitious; and ere long she remembered that the frail and feeble Charles VIII. was King of France, Louis d'Orleans the husband of the Princess Jeanne, and Maximilian lukewarm, and in the decline of life. Her most zealous friends urged her to accept the crown which she was so well fitted to adorn; and ultimately she consented to solicit from the pope a dispensation which might enable her to yield her hand to the French monarch.

Shortly after her marriage with Charles VIII, which took place with great pomp at Langeais, she was crowned at St. Denis; and her exulting husband then conducted her to Amboise, to which, as his birth-place, he was exceedingly attached, and which he proposed to embellish. An expedition to Italy, whence he had fondly flattered himself that he should return a conqueror, retarded, however, the execution of this project; but on his return to France he hastened to put it into execution; various plans were submitted to him, and he commenced the

construction of a new edifice which was destined to be regal in its decorations. But a fatal accident once more rendered his design abortive. As he was one day conducting the queen to the tennis-court, to reach which it was necessary to traverse a dark and low-roofed gallery, he struck his head against the archway of a door; and although he affected to treat the accident lightly, and even joined in the game, it soon became evident that he had received his death-blow; for on again entering the gallery to pass into his apartments, he was seized with a sudden giddiness, and fell to the ground senseless. In the agitation and terror of the moment his attendants made no effort to remove him from the close and gloomy spot where he had fallen, but laid him upon a squalid mattrass which had been flung down there by some menial of the castle, and on which he expired during the night in his twenty-eighth year.

The frightful nature of his death may perhaps account in some degree for the excessive grief displayed by the queen, for a husband of whose infidelities she had frequent and flagrant proofs, and whom she had never professed to love. Certain it is that, as if in order to render her affliction more conspicuous, she assumed the deepest sables as her mourning garb, although white had hitherto been the habitual dress of all royal widows in France. Despite these outward demonstrations, however, Anne received with undisguised pleasure the consolations tendered to her by the new king, through the medium of two of his confidential nobles, who played their part so well that they mingled their tears with her's, and prepared the way for their royal master; who, when

her first burst of grief had subsided, hastened to assure her of his deep sympathy in her affliction. By his command, and at his cost, a funeral service of extraordinary magnificence was celebrated in the chapel of Amboise for the repose of the soul of Charles VIII; and this duty was no sooner performed than he endeavoured to turn her thoughts from the husband whom she had lost, to the days in which, at the court of her father, they had first met, and yielded to an attachment which neither had yet forgotten.

"Obtain the dissolution of your marriage with Jeanne de France;" had ultimately whispered the new-made widow; "and I abandon my hand to you."

Louis XII. needed no second bidding; and while Anne hastened to conceal her present sorrows and her future hopes in the castle of Loches, the husband of the unhappy Jeanne took instant measures for effecting that divorce which was to be the last trial of her married life.

Only nine months after the death of Charles, Cæsar Borgia, the nephew of Alexander VI, delivered to the French monarch the bull by which the sovereign pontiff declared null and void the union contracted between Louis d'Orleans and Jeanne de France; and upon its receipt the dissolution of the marriage was publicly announced in the church of St. Denis at Amboise. The unfortunate daughter of Louis XI, whose meek virtues and devoted affection had been unable to obtain for her the heart of the man on whom she had been taught to look from her earliest childhood as the companion and protector of her future life, roused herself from the dejection and apathy into which she had fallen, and made one faint struggle while the divorce was still pending, to

maintain her right; but she was unable to contend against her destiny; and when the fatal dissolution was announced, she retired to Bourges, and passed the remainder of her piteous life in works of piety and benevolence. Among other good deeds she founded the convent of the Annunciation, visited the sick, and fed the hungry; and when, in 1504, she breathed out her peaceful soul, her body was followed to the grave by the tears and blessings of the poor.

The marriage of Anne de Bretagne with Louis XII. followed immediately upon the divorce which had broken the heart of the forsaken Jeanne; but the new queen did not revisit Amboise until the following year; when, although the monarch added to its attractions by the vast and magnificent plantation known as the royal garden, and made other improvements calculated to render it a more agreeable residence for his beautiful and idolized wife, Anne soon discovered that she had too many displeasing and still recent memories connected with the spot, willingly to become its habitual occupant; and thus the royal pair, after a short stay in the antique castle, abandoned it, and held their court successively at Blois, Loches, Chinon, and Paris.

The second marriage of Louis XII. was the first shadow cast over the brilliant prospects of the young Count Francis. The alleged sterility of Jeanne de France, and the feeble constitution of Charles VIII, had alike tended hitherto to raise the hopes of those who were interested in his succession to the throne; but those hopes now became much less sanguine as they reflected that Anne de Bretagne was not only still young, but also tenderly beloved by her

husband; and that there was, consequently, every reason to anticipate the birth of a Dauphin. Nevertheless, the queen herself looked upon the heir-presumptive with a jealous eye; all the children whom she had borne to Charles had died in their infancy, and the continual presence of the young prince at court was irksome to her.

Francis Count d'Angoulême was born at Coignac on the 12th of September, 1494, an event which Louise de Savoie,[1] his mother, has recorded, in her somewhat heterogeneous journal, with true maternal exultation.[2] He was only two years of age when he lost his father, and became the ward of his kinsman the Duke d'Orleans, who at once evinced the sincerity of his affection for his

[1] Louise de Savoie was the daughter of Philippe, duke de Savoie, and Marguerite de Bourbon. She was born at Bresse, in 1476, and in 1488 married Charles d'Orleans, duke d'Angoulême. She died in 1532.

[2] This journal, which, brief and unsatisfactory as it is, yet contains some important statistical facts, was discovered in the original MS. by a monk named Hilarion de Costa, in the library of M. de Hardy, a counsellor of the Châtelet, by whom it was given to M. Guichenon. The latter gentleman published it, among other papers of interest, at the termination of his "Histoire Généalogique de la Maison de Savoie;" and the Abbé Lambert subsequently appended it to his translation of the "Mémoires de Du-Bellay," in 1753.

One of the entries which it contains is so startling, and, were it not that the subject is unfitted for a jest, would be so ludicrous, that it must not be passed over without notice; particularly as the moral character of the princess, when placed in juxtaposition with her office, renders the whole transaction doubly disgraceful; and exposes, in a marked manner, the venality and corruption of the Romish Church. We give it in the original:—"L'an 1519, le 5 Juillet, frère François de Paule, des frères mendians évangélistes, fut par moi canonisé; à tout le moins, j'en ai payé la taxe." All comment would be idle.

young charge by selecting as his tutor the learned Artus de Gouffier Boisy, a gentleman of Poitou, who laboured assiduously to render both the mind and character of the boy-prince worthy of the eminent station which he might one day be called upon to fill. Madame d'Angoulême had passed the first years of her widowhood at Romorantin, where she devoted herself to the education of her son Francis, and her daughter Marguerite; until she was summoned to the court by the monarch, who was anxious to promote a close friendship between his queen and the mother of his young ward. In this endeavour, however, he signally failed. Anne de Bretagne and Louise de Savoie had too many conflicting jealousies at heart long to maintain even the semblance of friendship. Both were young, both eminently beautiful, and both eager to give a king to France; and thus a mutual distrust and dislike was engendered, which ere long increased to such an extent that they mutually threw off all disguise, and harassed alike the sovereign and his ministers by the cabals into which they severally entered. Time, instead of softening, served only to increase this unhappy animosity; and on the successive death of two infant sons, in each of whom Anne had for a few brief weeks fondly believed that she beheld the inheritor of the French crown, the exultation of Louise was so unbounded as to assume the character of insult; while the queen, irritated by a display of triumph which doubled the bitterness of her disappointment, became only more confirmed in her hatred of both mother and son.

Under these circumstances Louis XII. resolved to withdraw Madame d'Angoulême once more from the court;

and in the year 1504, he appointed Amboise as her place of residence; and confided to Pierre de Rohan, Maréchal de Gié, whom he greatly esteemed, the important office of governor to the young prince.[1]

The selection was a happy one: as during his sojourn in Italy, when general of the king's armies, M. de Gié had devoted himself to literature and the arts; which, together with his other manly accomplishments, had conduced to render him one of the most distinguished nobles of the age. He was, moreover, the descendant of one of the first families of Brittany, very wealthy, and celebrated for the loyalty and frankness of his character. Under the guidance of such a man as Pierre de Rohan, Louis consequently felt assured that his ward would never suffer from the want of his own superintendence; and the result justified his confidence; for the zealous efforts of the governor were soon apparent in the rapid progress of the pupil; who under his auspices imbibed that refinement of taste, and that manly bearing, for which he was afterwards so famous. Not content, however, with making him a scholar, M. de Gié sought also to render the very defects of the young prince subservient to his future greatness; and early observant of the impetuosity of his character, as well as the quickness of his intellect, he

[1] Pierre de Rohan, Seigneur de Gié, was one of the most powerful nobles at the court of Louis XI, who created him Marshal of France in 1475. He governed the kingdom conjointly with three other individuals of high rank during the dangerous illness of that monarch at Chinon, and commanded the vanguard of the army at the battle of Fornoue in 1495. Louis XII. appointed him Chief of the Council, Lieutenant-general in Brittany, and General of his forces in Italy. He was also Commandant of Anjou and Amboise.

spared no pains to inculcate the necessity of his acquiring that most difficult of all lessons, the art of self-government.

As regarded his martial exercises, Francis required little tuition; for, addicted from his earliest boyhood to manly and chivalrous pastimes, and gifted by nature with a person at once tall, robust, and graceful, he soon excelled all his companions, alike in the noble accomplishment of brilliant horsemanship, and in the use of weapons of every description; while by his natural cheerfulness, urbanity, and frankness of deportment, he effectually secured the affection of the friends of his boyhood, who subsequently became alike the ornament and the support of his throne.

Unfortunately, while devoting himself to the education of his royal pupil, the maréchal suffered himself to be captivated by the attractions of Madame d'Angoulême; who, far from scrupulous in her conduct, encouraged his evident admiration by her coquettish blandishments. It is probable that Louise de Savoie, deprived in her honourable exile of those opportunities of seduction of which she was so perfect a mistress, did not reflect upon the possible consequences of her imprudence upon the mind and heart of such a man as the Maréchal de Gié; for it is certain that she sought only to beguile the time which hung so heavily upon her hands, when she suffered him to believe that he was daily possessing himself of her affections, and had no inclination to return a passion which she regarded only with contempt. Thus the deluded noble was ultimately beguiled into a declaration, which was repulsed with a disdain so haughty and so

undisguised, that he uttered an internal vow that the scornful princess should one day bitterly repent the indignity which she had cast upon him.

Just at this juncture a letter reached the castle informing M. de Gié that the court had left Chinon for Blois, and would remain for a few days at Amboise; upon which the maréchal gave the necessary orders, and then, with his accustomed deference, hastened to communicate the king's intention to Madame d'Angoulême; whom he did not again meet until the arrival of the king and queen, with their brilliant retinue.

Anne de Bretagne was the first female sovereign of France who had ever conceived the idea of enhancing her dignity by the formation of a regularly organized household of ladies; and Brantôme expatiates with enthusiasm upon this novel addition to the court circle, so well calculated to increase the attraction of those receptions where heretofore all had been stately tedium; while he also asserts that so earnest was Anne in the accomplishment of her object, that she never refused to admit into her service any dame or damsel who was authorized to aspire to it by gentle birth; but, on the contrary, frequently questioned the nobles by whom she was approached, as to the extent of their families; and authorized them to invite their wives or daughters in her name to join the royal suite. Thus she soon accumulated a train of eight-and-twenty maids-of-honour, at salaries varying from thirty-five to one hundred annual livres; and sixteen ladies, either princesses, or the wives of men of the highest quality in the kingdom, all of whom were likewise salaried; and her court soon became the school

in which the noble youth of both sexes, who were permitted to study it, sought to fashion themselves.

Nor did even this new splendour satisfy the magnificent tastes of Anne, who felt that while she was thus increasing her own personal consequence, she was at the same time humiliating her haughty rival, Louise de Savoie; for her female circle was no sooner organized than she asked and obtained of the king that she should be permitted to increase the number of the body-guard which he had already conceded to her, to two hundred; most of whom were well-born gentlemen of Brittany, who were accustomed, when she left the palace of Blois, either to attend mass, or for the purpose of exercise, to await her upon the terrace, which was accordingly soon known as the "Bretons' Perch," from the fact that when she reached the door which led to her apartments, she never failed to remark, "There are my Bretons on their perch awaiting me."

Thus brilliantly attended, therefore, did she arrive at the castle of Amboise; and among her graceful suite two lovely young princesses were equally conspicuous—the one was Germaine de Foix, the niece of the king, and the sister of the brave and accomplished Gaston, who perished in the bloom of youth at the battle of Ravenna; and the other, Suzanne de Bourbon, the only child of Anne de France and the Sire de Beaujeu.

The train of the king was less numerous, as most of the young nobles who were of an age to encounter the fatigues of a campaign had sought and obtained permission to join the army in Italy, where Louis still maintained the disastrous struggle which had been commenced by his predecessor Charles VIII.

Nevertheless, he numbered in his retinue more than one scion of the most illustrious families of France; among others the Duke d'Alençon, then considered as the future husband of Mademoiselle de Bourbon, but who subsequently married Marguerite d'Angoulême, the sister of Francis; the Count Charles de Montpensier;[1] M. de Vandenesse[2] the younger brother of the Marquis de la Palice;[3] and Guillaume Gouffier, Seigneur de Bonnivet.[4]

M. de Gié had arranged a series of festivities for the amusement of the court during their residence at Am-

[1] Charles de Montpensier, Duc de Bourbon, afterwards so celebrated as Connétable de Bourbon, was the second son of Gilbert, Count de Montpensier, and was born in 1489. He was made Constable in 1515, and subsequently became Viceroy of Milan. He acquired great renown at the battle of Marignano; but, compelled by the injustice of the queen-mother, who disputed his claim to his domains, to leave France, he offered his services to Charles V, and commanded his forces during the wars of Italy. He was killed in 1527, at the siege of Rome, and died without issue.

[2] Jean de Chabannes, Seigneur de Vandenesse, who was subsequently captain of a thousand foot soldiers at the battle of Ravenna. He was killed at the retreat of Rebec..

[3] Jacques de Chabannes, Seigneur de la Palice, Marshal of France, Governor of Bourbon, Auvergne, Forez, Beaujolais, and Lyons, was the most distinguished member of a family celebrated for the number of great men which it has produced, and one of the most renowned generals of his time. He served in Italy under both Charles VIII. and Louis XII, and was killed at the battle of Pavia in 1525.

[4] Guillaume Gouffier, Seigneur de Bonnivet, was subsequently Admiral of France, and General-in-chief of the armies of Francis I. in Italy. He distinguished himself in several engagements; but having, by his imprudence, caused the loss of the battle of Pavia, he threw himself in despair into the ranks of the enemy, and was killed.

boise, but the health of the king had become so much shaken by the unfavourable intelligence which daily reached him from Italy, and by the obstinate opposition of Anne to various resolutions with which a wise policy had inspired him, that he was incapable of the exertion which they would have required. Devotedly attached to her person, he had accustomed himself to yield to her wishes, not only in every instance wherein she considered that her personal interests or dignity as queen of France were in any way involved, but even on points of more importance; and so anxious had he shown himself to maintain by every means in his power the respect and deference which he considered as her due, that no ambassador or foreigner of rank who visited the court, after he had been received by the king himself, was exempted from the necessity of proceeding at once to the queen's apartments with the same ceremony, in order that it might be understood how completely he identified her in all the honours of his own regality.

Naturally arrogant and ambitious, this new innovation upon the accustomed etiquette of the court sufficed to fill up the measure of her self-appreciation; but the measure, nevertheless, proved to be one of sound policy; for the extreme grace and courtesy of manner which distinguished Anne de Bretagne, coupled with an erudition which, if it failed to be profound, was at least remarkable at that period, and a superficial knowledge of several languages, in which she constantly laboured to perfect herself, enabled her to address the various strangers who presented themselves in their own native idiom; and thus to secure to herself a popularity which increased the

charm of her conversation, and admirably assisted her views.

Although she had lost her sons, she had become the mother of a princess, whom Louis was anxious to affiance to the young Count d'Angoulême, his heir-presumptive; but this project met with the most resolute opposition on her part. Duchess of Brittany in her own right; and permitted, through the affectionate indulgence of her royal husband, an absolute control over all the affairs of the duchy, she openly avowed her desire to render it an independent government; and, probably instigated as much by her dislike of the Countess d'Angoulême as by any more political consideration, she was no sooner made aware that Louis was already meditating à marriage for the infant princess, than she proceeded to negotiate an alliance with the Duke de Luxembourg, the grandson of the Archduke Maximilian, to whom she had herself been betrothed, and of which the principal condition was to be the cession of Brittany as a portion of the bride's dowry. The monarch, actuated at once by his affection for his consort, which rendered him averse to oppose her wishes, and by his desire not to aggravate the animosity between herself and Louise de Savoie, suffered the negotiation to proceed; and thus encouraged her to interfere in the differences which existed between himself and Pope Julius II. Anne, who was deeply tinctured with the superstition of the time, affected, or perhaps felt, the greatest horror upon seeing her husband in open animosity against the sovereign-pontiff; and regardless of the fact that Julius was the enemy of the king, and the sworn foe of France, she so warmly and pertinaciously

supported the cause of the Holy See, that Louis was once surprised into exclaiming; "By heaven! my Breton dame, any one, to hear you so decidedly condemn what the most celebrated universities have approved, would imagine that you esteem yourself more learned than the age! Have your confessors never told you that women have no voice in the church?"

The reproof came, however, too late. Anne had become accustomed to follow the dictates of her own will; and notwithstanding this remonstrance, she availed herself of her right of sovereignty over Brittany, which was secured to her by her marriage contract, to forbid the attendance of all the bishops of that province at the council which was about to assemble at Pisa, with intentions evidently hostile to Julius. Addicted both to political and social intrigue, she seldom suffered either to become conspicuous; and it was only when her pride or her vanity was outraged, that she was betrayed into a vehemence that revealed the true extent of the passions by which she was governed.

On the departure of the court from Amboise, the king, at the request of Madame d'Angoulême (who had fulfilled her duties of hostess with a composure and courtesy which considerably diminished the anticipated triumph of the queen), consented to leave at the castle three of the young nobles of his suite, as companions to her son. These were Charles de Montpensier, Guillaume de Gouffier, and M. de Vandenesse. The latter, by his handsome person and courtly manners, had attracted the attention of Louise de Savoie, and in her desire to retain him at Amboise, had originated the idea of making this application.

Of the new inmates of the castle, all of whom were several years older than the young count, Francis soon learnt to prefer Gouffier, whose joyous temperament and supple nature admirably adapted him for the companionship of princes. The proud, self-centred, and reserved temper of Charles de Montpensier, at once chilled and irritated him; while de Vandenesse appeared absorbed rather by his mother than himself.

The only person towards whom Charles de Montpensier wholly unbent, was Mademoiselle d'Angoulême. Although she had scarcely attained her thirteenth year, her grace, intellect, and acquirements were remarkable; and ere long the heart of the proud and reserved young noble was at her feet. Two years the senior of Francis, she was born on the 11th of April, 1492, in the old castle of the city of Angoulême. The early death of her father affected her interests but little; as, although "one of the best men among the princes of the blood," according to the declaration of Charles VIII, he committed the education of his children entirely to his wife, whose stronger mind and higher attainments rendered her more competent to such a charge. The nurture of the young, and beautiful, and high-spirited Marguerite differed in almost every particular from that of the pious and gentle princess Claude, whom Anne de Bretagne was rearing in the most absolute seclusion. The audacious, unscrupulous and ambitious spirit of Louise de Savoie, did not even seek to leaven itself by religion; and thus the atmosphere breathed by the young countess, from her earliest girlhood, was redolent of gallantry, pleasure, and intrigue. Nature had richly endowed her both in mind and person;

and the extraordinary aptitude and perseverance with which she devoted herself to study even from her infancy, was, probably, her best safeguard against corruption. As she emerged from girlhood, her proficiency as a linguist excited universal astonishment; while in philosophy and poetry she delighted; and such of her compositions as are still in existence, however grievously and painfully they may be wanting in morality, are yet distinguished by an ease and grace of expression which contrasts in a marked manner with the inflated and extravagant style of contemporary writers.

The mutual affection which subsisted between herself and her brother became a proverb among all who witnessed it. The whole soul of the boy-count appeared to be wrapped up in his graceful and richly endowed sister, to whom he referred his tastes, his wishes, and his pursuits; while, on her side, Marguerite guided him by her counsels, assisted him by her riper attainments, and gladdened him by her love. Both in person and in mind they resembled each other greatly: in each existed the same marked and commanding features, the same quickness of intellect, and the same thirst for knowledge. Nor were they less similar in their love of pleasure, and we use the word in its most comprehensive sense. No wonder, therefore, that Francis idolized his sister, whom he was accustomed to call his *pet*, the *Marguerite of Marguerites*, and the *pearl beyond price*.

Notwithstanding all the caution of Montpensier, the secret of his attachment for Mademoiselle d'Angoulême was soon discovered by Gouffier, who had become equally enslaved by her attractions; and from that moment com-

MARGARET DE VALOIS.

ENGRAVED BY S. FREEMAN, FROM A PORTRAIT PUBLISHED IN NIEL'S "ILLUSTRES FRANCAIS DU 16me SIÈCLE."

menced a hatred between the two young nobles, which was destined to endure throughout their lives. Marguerite, still a mere girl, and hitherto engrossed by her studies, knew nothing of love save in theory, and was consequently some time ere she was able fully to comprehend the devotion of the Count Charles; but she had no sooner done so, than she returned his passion with all the ardour of her young and guileless heart. With the natural timidity of an inexperienced girl, she, however, shrank from confiding the state of her newly awakened feelings to her boy-brother; who, instigated by Gouffier, his favourite compànion, soon evinced a decided distaste to the young Montpensier, which at length obtained such a mastery over him, that, after a quarrel in the Tennis-court, Francis, whose warlike temper revealed itself upon all occasions, declared his determination to meet him in single combat; nor was it without considerable difficulty that M. de Gié succeeded in calming him. The habitual authority of the Maréchal over the proud spirit of the prince assured him, however, of an ultimate, even if a hardly-won triumph; but it was far otherwise when he sought to pacify Charles de Montpensier; who, although infinitely less demonstrative in his indignation than his antagonist, felt far more deeply. He replied briefly to the expostulations of M. de Gié; evinced no disposition to make the slightest concession; and, after having asked a parting interview with Madame d'Angoulême and her gifted daughter, left the castle the same day; but instead of proceeding to Blois, where the king almost immediately upon his arrival, had complained of serious indisposition; he at once directed his steps to Paris, where he rejoined

his relative and god-mother, Madame de Bourbon, from whom he had been separated when the court left Amboise.

His sudden and abrupt departure inflicted upon Marguerite the first heart-pang that she had ever experienced; but by her mother it was scarcely remembered beyond the hour. The passion which Louise de Savoie had permitted herself to encourage for M. de Vandenesse, had created an ideal world about her which shut out all that it did not involve within its own vortex; while the young noble, flattered by the love of so great and handsome a princess, not content with the favours which she lavished upon him, had the extreme imprudence to assume her colours; and, discarding the grey and green in which he had formerly appeared, to assume the blue and silver in which she usually attired herself. This change did not escape the keen eye of the maréchal, who felt that his hour of revenge was come; and he accordingly kept so strict a watch upon the movements of his favoured rival, that he at length surprised him as he was stealthily making his way through an obscure gallery which led to the apartments of Madame d'Angoulême.

"Sir;" said the vigilant M. de Gié sarcastically; "I am aware that this corridor leads only to the chambers occupied by the female attendants of the countess; I will not, therefore, demand to know, as I have every right to do in my capacity of governor of this castle, upon what errand you are bound at so unusual an hour. I will confine myself simply to the request that you will immediately retrace your steps, and leave Amboise by dawn to-morrow; as I can allow no one to remain within these walls whose example may prove pernicious to my royal pupil."

M. de Vandenesse, fearing to compromise the princess by a resistance which would, moreover, have proved useless, as he could not successfully contend against the official authority of the maréchal, made no reply; but, bowing respectfully, returned to his own chamber; where, having summoned his valet, and made the necessary arrangements, he remained until daylight, when he mounted, and rode from the castle of Amboise without even having an opportunity of paying his parting respects to his late hostess.

Louise de Savoie, on ascertaining the hurried and unceremonious departure of the young noble, was instantly convinced that he had retired at the instigation of M. de Gié, who had thus seized the first opportunity of revenge for his own dismissal; and even amid the bitterness of her annoyance, she smiled a haughty smile as she reflected that the time might yet come when she would make him rue his interference; nor did she once condescend to allude to the circumstance. Madame d'Angoulême, unlike the generality of her sex, rarely sought her vengeance in words.

The malady of the king soon assumed the most alarming aspect; and as, notwithstanding her habitual self-sufficiency, Anne de Bretagne was by no means insensible to the affection which her royal husband had so constantly lavished upon her, she devoted herself to him in this emergency with the most exemplary solicitude, seldom absenting herself from the sick-room, save when compelled to do so by her public duties. For a time, however, her cares were vain. The disease daily acquired strength; and the court physicians at length reluctantly confessed their

inability to arrest its progress. This declaration fell like a thunderbolt upon the anxious queen. At one glance she saw and appreciated all the difficulty of her position when Louise de Savoie should become the mother of the reigning monarch; and resolved not to subject herself to the insults of a triumphant enemy, she determined to retire into Brittany the moment that the king had ceased to live; as there she could still maintain her sovereign state, and enjoy the undivided power which had always been the dream of her ambition. Thus, while she still continued to bestow the most affectionate attentions upon her royal consort, his apparently desperate condition by no means absorbed the whole of her reflections; and she lost no time in causing all her most costly furniture, jewels, and every other article of value which, from having been devoted to her use, she considered as her own property, to be hastily packed up, and despatched to Nantes by the Loire.

"By St. Yves!" exclaimed the indignant Maréchal de Gié, when he learnt the somewhat premature measures adopted by Anne; "the Breton Dame never loses her wits where her interests are concerned; but, *vrai Dieu!* I will show her that I am Breton too; and that I know how to perform the duties of the office that has been intrusted to me. She is a trifle too hasty in her movements, and has acted like the wife of a trader, rather than that of a great monarch. Our good and well-beloved king and master is not yet, perhaps, upon his death-bed, as she imagines; and it is somewhat of the earliest for Madame la Reine to remove, upon her own authority, and from the royal palaces, effects which the

successor of her husband may reclaim as the property of the crown."

These impolitic and somewhat intemperate words were, unfortunately for the fiery Pierre de Rohan, uttered in the presence of several individuals; and, among others, in that of Madame d'Angoulême, and M. de Pontbriant, the chamberlain of the young prince; but, as his zeal had been awakened by his anxiety to protect the interests of his pupil, and that Pontbriant was his *protégé*, and indebted to him for the very appointment which he then held, M. de Gié could not anticipate that either would be guilty of a breach of trust.

His threat was speedily followed up; for, leaving the apartment with the mien of a chafed lion, he gave immediate orders for stopping the boats which the queen had freighted, upon their passage; but he had received his information too late to render this practicable, as they had passed Amboise before the news reached him; when, resolved not to be thwarted in his design, he no sooner ascertained the fact, than he despatched his mounted men-at-arms to seize their lading at Namur. The haughty spirit of the queen, on being apprised of this bold proceeding, was instantly aroused; and when, contrary to all expectation, Louis XII. began slowly to recover from his malady, she availed herself of the increased influence which she had obtained over him during his sufferings, to represent the conduct of the governor of Amboise in the darkest colours; carefully avoiding the main subject of her displeasure, and basing her accusations upon the fact that the maréchal had indulged in insulting reflections, not only upon herself personally,

but also upon the king; and treated with contemptuous disapprobation many public acts of his government. The great regard which Louis had long felt for M. de Gié rendered him reluctant to give credence to this report; but Anne met his doubts by affirming that she could produce witnesses to the truth of what she had advanced; and thus the king found himself compelled to put the maréchal upon his trial.

Numerous witnesses appeared against him, when he was cited before the parliament of Toulouse on the charge of *lèse-majesté;* and among the rest, Madame d'Angoulême; who, in her thirst for vengeance, was arrested neither by the consideration that the maréchal had fallen under the displeasure of Anne in order to protect the interests of her own son, nor even by the fact that in her eagerness to injure M. de Gié, she was furthering the views of a woman whom she hated.

The maréchal treated alike the accusation and the witnesses with haughty contempt; and the only reproach which he uttered to Louise de Savoie, when he perceived that the most virulent of his accusers were herself and Pontbriant, was contained in words which cannot fail to remind the reader of the dying exclamation of Wolsey: "And you too, Madam? Had I only served my God as I have served you, I should have little to regret upon my death-bed."

After numerous deliberations and delays, the parliament ultimately acquitted M. de Gié of the crime of *lèse-majesté;* but, by a singular inconsistency, which savoured strongly of extraneous influence—an inference which is, moreover, strengthened by the fact that Anne,

whose natural cupidity was notorious, had employed no less a sum than thirty-two thousand livres in urging his judges to greater severity and despatch—pronounced that for *certain excesses* and other delinquencies, the Maréchal de Gié should be deprived of the title and office of Governor of the Count d'Angoulême, and his command of the castles of Amboise and Angers; and that for the space of five years he should abstain from the exercise of his functions as Marshal of France, during which period he should be exiled from the residences of the court.

M. de Gié bore his disgrace as philosophically as he had borne his prosperity; and resigning his forfeited dignities, retired to Anjou, where he lived surrounded by splendour, and totally indifferent to the exultation of those who had conspired against him.

The implacable nature of Anne de Bretagne displayed itself upon this occasion in a marked manner. When urged by Pontbriant to suggest that the culprit should be subjected to *the question*, in order to compel him to a confession of his crime, she declared that she had no wish to see him condemned to die, as were he to lose his head he would soon be unconscious of the degradation to which he was now subjected; but that, on the contrary, her desire was that he should live, in order that he might contrast his present disgrace and insignificance with his former greatness; and amid regret, suffering, and mortification, endure a lasting agony, which to his proud spirit would be more bitter a hundredfold than death itself.

Meanwhile her late alarm had rendered her only the

more determined to accomplish her project regarding the disposal of Brittany, and to crush the hopes of Louise de Savoie that her son would one day inherit her beloved duchy; and she accordingly urged on the secret correspondence into which she had already entered with the son of the Archduke Philip with increased eagerness; and with so much success, that this prince, in conjunction with Maximilian, finally opened a negotiation with Louis XII, which terminated in the treaty of Blois, by which it was stipulated that the Princess Claude, with the present possession of the counties of Ast, Boulogne, and Blois, and the duchy of Brittany in perspective, upon the death of her mother, should be given in marriage to the young Duke de Luxembourg.

This matrimonial compact was a fatal blow to the ambition of Louise de Savoie, and the prospects of her son. Madame d'Angoulême had, until that moment, never ceased to flatter herself that upon a point so vital to the interests of the nation, as well as so interesting to his own feelings, the will and wishes of the king must ultimately prevail; and now she was fated to witness the failure of her anticipations; while Francis, who had long considered the infant princess as his destined wife, not only found himself robbed of his bride, but saw his future kingdom shorn of some of its most important and valuable provinces.

CHAPTER II.

[1504-7.]

MARGUERITE DE VALOIS ASKED IN MARRIAGE BY HENRY VII. — REFUSAL OF LOUIS XII.—MARGUERITE MARRIED TO THE DUKE D'ALENCON—HER RELUCTANCE — MOTIVES OF THE KING—HER WRITINGS — RELAPSE OF LOUIS XII.—DEATH OF ISABELLA OF SPAIN—MARRIAGE OF GERMAINE DE FOIX WITH FERDINAND OF CASTILE—THE STATES-GENERAL ASSEMBLED—FRANCIS BETROTHED TO THE PRINCESS CLAUDE—DEATH OF THE ARCHDUKE PHILIP—JEANNE LA FOLLE—THE POPE DETERMINES ON WAR —CHARACTER OF JULIUS II.—LOUIS SENDS AN ARMY TO BOLOGNA —GENOA REVOLTS—WANTON CRUELTIES PERPETRATED BY THE GENOESE —LOUIS PROCEEDS TO ITALY AT THE HEAD OF A LARGE ARMY—GENOA CAPITULATES—LOUIS XII. TAKES POSSESSION OF THE CITY—A COURT FESTIVAL—DANCING BISHOPS—INTERVIEW BETWEEN LOUIS XII. AND FERDINAND—GONSALVO DE CARDOVA—REFUSAL OF THE POPE TO MEET LOUIS XII.

CHAPTER II.

[1504-7.]

When the failing health of Louis XII. induced the belief that his life was drawing to its close, the hand of Marguerite d'Angoulême, the sister of the heir-presumptive to the throne, was asked by Henry VII. of England; but after mature deliberation the Grand Council declined to sanction the marriage, being apprehensive, as they affirmed, that it would involve the two countries in perpetual warfare, and tend to undermine the salic law in France. A second proposition of the same nature was also declined from similar motives; while the king himself opposed her union with Charles of Austria, and declared his determination to bestow her in marriage upon Charles III. duke d'Alençon; a decision at which the high and already matured spirit of Marguerite revolted; perceiving, as she at once did, the intellectual inferiority of the man to whom she should thus be compelled to promise obedience and respect. It was, consequently, with bitter tears that she submitted to the commands of the monarch, and the wishes of her mother; for she foresaw how little suited they were to each other, and how cheerless was the prospect thus opened before her. The duke was deficient in all the brilliant qualities for which Marguerite was herself distinguished, nor did he even possess the negative merit of appreciating them in another;

and thus the young princess perceived that she must be sufficient to herself, while the bright illusion was for ever vanished which had led her to believe that she should be valued at her own hearth for the acquirements which it had cost her so much labour to attain.

The only apparent motive by which Louis XII. had been impelled to insist upon this ill-assorted marriage, was his desire to terminate a process then pending between the Duke d'Alençon and the Count d'Angoulême as the conflicting heirs of Marie d'Armagnac; and it was accordingly arranged that on its celebration, the latter should abandon his claim in favour of his sister, whose dowry thus amounted to 450,000 livres.

No pecuniary consideration could, however, reconcile Marguerite to so repugnant an union; and, when she found it inevitable, she declared that thenceforth she gave her heart to God, as she could never bestow it upon her husband; an engagement which it was, perhaps, beyond her power to fulfil; for it is certain that however actually innocent she may have been, she was nevertheless morally guilty, inasmuch as she carried her predilections beyond the due bounds of female delicacy and warrantable friendship, although she may never wholly have forgotten her dignity as a woman and a princess. Her attachment to Charles de Montpensier militated moreover against that perfect self-abnegation which she professed; while her disgraceful adventure with Bonnivet, which she has triumphantly recorded in the fourth tale of the Heptameron, is so far from redounding to her honour either as a woman or a wife, that the reader involuntarily feels the utter impossibility of its occurrence

without a previous levity on her part which appeared to sanction the indignity to which she was subjected. Moreover, even her panegyrist Brantôme is betrayed into the confession that "*En fait de joyeusetés et de galanteries, elle montrait qu'elle en savait plus que son pain quotidien.*" No marvel, however, when it is remembered that she was reared by Louise de Savoie, and became the willing confidante of her brother's gallantries. Among other frivolities unworthy of so superior a mind, the Duchesse d'Alençon originated the custom between friends of opposite sexes, which, by authorizing them to style each other *allied brothers and sisters*, gave them the privilege of openly declaring their mutual attachment, to which, whatever might really be its nature or extent, it was understood that no scandal was to be attached.

Even with all due consideration of the lax state of society in that age, the mind and heart which could suggest and share in so unseemly a folly, and so immodest an exhibition as this, must have been perverted at the core; and, as we read, we cease to wonder, and to mourn over the prostitution of her fine talents, when we remember that so polluted a stream could produce no current of pure and healthful fancy.

In other respects the character of the princess Marguerite did credit to her mother's training. With all the natural energy of Madame d'Angoulême, she had more self-government; and it was only in moments of great excitement that she suffered herself to be betrayed into any exhibition of unwomanly vehemence; while her devotion to those she loved was almost chivalric. But her moral profligacy casts a dark shadow over the

brilliancy of her other and more estimable qualities, by which they must ever be clouded in the eyes of posterity.

The treaty of marriage between Claude de France and Charles de Luxembourg had scarcely been concluded, when the king suffered a relapse of the same malady to which he had so nearly fallen a victim during the preceding year; and the Cardinal d'Amboise,[1] who foresaw the most dangerous results, should it be accomplished, absolved the king from the fulfilment of his pledge, and induced him to execute a will, by which he directed that the Princess Claude should become the wife of her cousin Francis, Count d'Angoulême, so soon as their respective ages should render their marriage practicable; and appointed the queen and Louise de Savoie joint regents of the kingdom in the interim. This testamentary document was drawn up on the 31st of May, 1505, and contained the following passage:—"Item. We very expressly will and command that our said daughter make her residence within our kingdom, without departing hence, until her marriage with our very dear and beloved nephew, the Duke de Valois, Count d'Angoulême, be duly solemnized."

The recovery of the king however, which shortly supervened, rendered the will nugatory; and thus this extraordinary regency was not fated to take effect. It will,

[1] George, Cardinal d'Amboise, was born in 1460, in the castle of Chaumont-sur-Loire, near Montauban; and was successively bishop of Montauban, archbishop of Narbonne, archbishop of Rouen, and, finally, cardinal and first minister of Louis XII. from 1499 to 1510, the period of his death. It was by his advice that Louis undertook the conquest of the Milanese. He made strenuous efforts to obtain the tiara, but was defeated by the Cardinal of Rovera.

at the first glance, appear extraordinary that Anne de Bretagne should offer no opposition upon this second occasion to the betrothal of her daughter with Francis, after having so strenuously laboured hitherto to prevent it; but those whom she admitted to her intimacy were well aware that, although apparently passive, she was as much averse to it as ever, and as firmly resolved to discountenance their actual marriage; a fact which her inconsequent contribution of 100,000 crowns to the dowry of the princess sufficed ultimately to prove. The truth was, that she had by no means lost confidence in her final success; she had not yet relinquished the hope of again becoming a mother; and she had every reason to conclude that Louis XII, having so unhesitatingly released himself from his solemn obligation towards Charles de Luxembourg, would, should he find it expedient to shake off the trammels of this second engagement, be even less scrupulous than before; and she, therefore, continued to pursue her negotiations with Austria, as though the betrothal determined by the monarch was to have no influence over the ultimate disposal of her daughter.

The death of Isabella of Spain, which took place during this year, induced Ferdinand to make overtures of peace to France; and, in order to effect this object, he demanded of Louis the hand of his beautiful niece, Germaine de Foix, the daughter of his sister Mary, who had married Jean de Foix, Vicomte de Narbonne; and the same time that he gave his ambassadors authority to make this demand, he also accredited them to Francis the heir-presumptive to the throne, believing that Louis

was then near his end. The proposition was accepted; and by a treaty signed at Blois, on the 12th of October, and destined on this occasion to prove valid, Louis ceded to his niece his claim to the kingdom of Naples; on the condition, however, that should the princess die without issue, the Neapolitan territories should return to the crown of France. Ferdinand, on his part, pledged himself to pay to the French king 100,000 ducats annually for the space of ten years; while the two monarchs were to ally themselves and their respective interests so closely as to form, according to their own expression, "two souls in one body;" and to render to each other reciprocal assistance in every emergency without exception; Louis XII. to furnish a thousand lances, and Ferdinand three thousand foot. The Spanish king moreover bound himself to grant a free pardon to all the Neapolitans who had embraced the French cause, and to restore their property.

The marriage was accordingly solemnized; and Ferdinand immediately left Spain, and proceeded to Naples.

Delivered for a time from all prospect of foreign aggression, Louis applied himself to the internal economy of his kingdom; and more desirous than ever to accomplish the union of his daughter with Francis, from having discovered the secret, and therefore more irritating opposition of the queen, he caused an assembly of the States-General to be convened at Tours, which was understood to originate with the nobles themselves, but where the counsellors of the king instructed them beforehand in the *rôle* which they were expected to enact; and directed them to enforce upon the monarch the expe-

diency of annulling the treaty to which he had previously bound himself by oath. This done, Louis repaired to Tours, to give them the audience they had demanded; and received the deputies in the great hall of Plessis-les-Tours. On the right hand of the throne were stationed the Cardinals of Amboise and Narbonne, the chancellor, and a number of bishops; and on the left, Francis, Count d'Angoulême, upon whom he had already bestowed the title of Duke de Valois, the princes of the blood, the principal nobles of the kingdom, the president of the parliament of Paris, and some of the members of the council.

Thomas Bricot, a canon of Notre Dame, and senior deputy of Paris, was selected to open the proceedings, which he did with considerable eloquence; and after having expressed to his royal hearer the gratitude of the nation for all the benefits which his subjects had experienced under his rule—the reduction effected in the public taxes—the cessation of the formerly unrestrained licentiousness of the soldiery—and the reformations which had taken place in the courts of justice, alike in Paris and in the provinces, he concluded his harangue thus:—"For all these reasons he should be called Louis XII, the Father of his People!"

Loud acclamations greeted this burst of loyal affection; and the king was so much moved by the general enthusiasm that he could not control his tears.

When silence was restored, the orator sank upon his knee, an example which was followed by the whole of the deputies; and, in this position, he resumed: "Sire, we are here by your good pleasure, in order to proffer to you

a request which involves the general good of your kingdom; and this is, that your very humble subjects beseech you to bestow Madame, your only daughter, in marriage upon Monsieur François here present, who is in all respects a Frenchman."

By order of the king, the Chancellor Gui de Rochefort[1] replied to the States' deputies, informing them that his majesty would confer with the princes of the blood upon the subject of the proposed alliance; and the assembly was then adjourned to the following day; when Louis, with a feigned reluctance which he was far from feeling, announced that "he condescended to their demand and request," and desired that the betrothal of the two children should take place on the second day from that time, which was the Feast of the Ascension. The youthful pair were accordingly solemnly affianced by the Cardinal d'Amboise in the presence of the whole court; and, previous to the ceremony, the chancellor read aloud the marriage articles, which secured to the Princess Claude, even in the event of sons being subsequently born to the king, the counties of Ast and Blois, the lordships of Soissons and Coucy, and 100,000 crowns, given, as we have already stated, by the queen.

Thus, long after she had despaired of such a triumph, Madame d'Angoulême witnessed her son's betrothal to the daughter of his sovereign, and saw him publicly recognised as heir-presumptive to the crown; and, had she

[1] Gui de Rochefort, Seigneur de Pleuvant in Burgundy, was the chamberlain and counsellor of Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, and afterwards passed into the service of Louis XI. Charles VIII. made him chancellor of France.

not been compelled to look through so long a perspective of time—for, at this period, Francis had only attained his fourteenth and Claude her fourth year—even her restless ambition would have been satisfied.

The bad faith exhibited by Louis XII. in this uncompromising violation of a solemn treaty, and the ambiguous manner in which he sought to excuse himself to the Austrian court, in an autograph letter which he addressed to Guillaume de Croy, Sire de Chièvres,[1] to whom Philip had confided the government of the Low Countries during his absence in England, and in which he declared that he had liberated himself from his engagement "for reasons which would be too long to relate," convinced its recipient that a war must necessarily ensue between France and his own sovereign; and he accordingly took instant measures to fortify his frontier; but Philip, whose position in Spain was precarious, and who feared to engage in foreign hostilities while still contending with his father-in-law for the possession of Castile, replied evasively to the announcement which he received of the betrothal of the Princess Claude to the Duke Francis; asserting that he could not express any sentiment upon the subject "until he had first communicated

[1] Guillaume de Croy, Seigneur de Chièvres, Duke de Soria, and Knight of the Golden Fleece, was the descendant of an ancient family, which derived its name from the village of Croy, in Picardy. He became celebrated for his military prowess, during the reigns of Charles VIII. and Louis XII. He was the governor of Charles of Austria, afterwards Emperor of Germany. Having allied himself to the fortunes of that prince, he was sent to Spain in the quality of viceroy; but, while holding that important trust, he tarnished his reputation by the most extortionate exactions. He died at Worms in 1521.

and consulted with the king his father, and the king of Aragon his father-in-law, whom it concerned." The letter terminated with fervent expressions of attachment to the person of the French monarch, but afforded no clue to the real feelings of the writer upon the point in question.

The death of the Archduke Philip, who perished of pestilential fever at Burgos, on the 25th of September, 1506, at the age of twenty-eight years, and only three months after his entry into Castile, suspended for a time all the warlike demonstrations which were beginning to develop themselves. The miserable and morbid state of mind of his widow, *Jeanne la Folle,* elder daughter of Isabella the Catholic, in right of whom she inherited the kingdom, necessitated the election of a more efficient governor. The condition of Queen Joanna was indeed deplorable; and forbade all hope of her ever again being enabled to assume the functions of a sovereign. Weak and suspicious, as well as jealous to a fearful excess, she had seldom, during the lifetime of her husband, left the suite of apartments appropriated to her use; where, incapable of pursuing any occupation or amusement, she passed her time in wandering through the rooms, uttering incoherent menaces, and occasionally indulging in still more incoherent bursts of grief. The death of Philip had confirmed this incipient madness. She caused his body to be embalmed, and laid upon a bed of state in her own chamber, dressed in the most magnificent manner; while she sat beside it, with her eyes fixed upon the motionless countenance, waiting for the first sign of that returning

life which she believed was by some miracle to be restored to him. Her jealousy still continued as great as ever; and from the period of the embalmment of the corpse, she suffered no female to enter the room in which he lay. Nor did she falter in her task even for an instant; it was in vain that she was entreated to open despatches, authorize orders, or sign state documents; she answered every appeal by pointing with her attenuated finger towards the lifeless body, and briefly uttering, "Wait!"

The helpless condition of her children awakened all the best sympathies of Louis XII; and he caused a letter to be written to Marguerite of Austria, in which he declared that he was willing to treat the sons of Philip as though they were his own. Maximilian, however, asserted that to him alone belonged the guardianship of his grandson, Charles de Luxembourg, who, in default of his mother, must be recognised as King of Castile; while Ferdinand, who had learnt the death of his son-in-law at Genoa, continued his route to Naples, calculating that the confusion which must exist in the kingdom at such a juncture, would materially conduce to his own popularity and welcome.

The calm was not, however, destined to be of long continuance; for while Spain, Germany, and France were passively awaiting the progress of events, Julius II, who filled the pontifical see, and who, in addition to his restless and warlike tastes, felt, or affected, as much contempt as dislike towards the two latter nations, which he qualified with the title of "barbarians," resolved to take the initiative; and to restore to the

dominion of the Church all the domains which had from time to time been wrested from it. His first object was the subjugation of Venice, as the most arrogant and the most powerful of those states which had openly declared their independence; but the cause which he had most at heart was the destruction of the French interest throughout Italy.

The costume which had been adopted by the sovereign pontiff, his flowing beard, and bent figure, gave him an appearance of extreme old age, although, according to one of his historians, he had at this period only reached his sixty-third year; but his mind was still strong and clear, and his passions violent. Haughty, irascible, and unscrupulous, he was nevertheless brave, judicious, and full of love for his country; but the clerical habit sat loosely upon him, while his fingers clutched firmly the hilt of the sabre, or the bridle of the war-horse. As a warrior Julius II. would have been a hero; as a pope he was only a licentious and grasping churchman.

Having raised both money and troops, the chagrin of Julius was excessive upon finding that a treaty into which he had induced Louis XII. to enter with Maximilian, for their joint invasion of the Venetian territory—a treaty which had, moreover, been subsequently renewed at Cambray—was set aside by the more recent alliance formed between the French king and Ferdinand; a circumstance which compelled him to abandon for a time the reduction of the Venetians, and the recovery of the cities of Faenza and Rimini, of which, upon the death of Cæsar Borgia, they had possessed themselves. Nevertheless he resolved not to delay the punishment of other delin-

quents, who had flung the yoke of the papal government from their necks; and the first against whom he directed his arms were Jean Paul Baglioni, the hereditary sovereign of Pérousa, and Jean Bentivoglio, who held a similar sway over Bologna, two of the most powerful cities of the pontifical states. The latter had purchased the protection of France by the payment of a considerable tribute, and might therefore justly anticipate the aid of that country in an emergency like the present; the rather, moreover, that Bologna, over which his family had reigned for more than a century, was esteemed essential to the defence of the Milanese; but Julius was not to be deterred by this consideration; and, resolved at once to assert his own will and the authority of the Church, he called upon Louis to furnish him with troops, and upon the Venetians to remain neuter.

Taken by surprise, both the one and the other agreed to his demands against their better judgment; and the warlike pontiff left Rome on the 27th of August at the head of four hundred men-at-arms, and with a suite of twenty-four cardinals. He found no enemy to combat, however, in Baglioni, who, terrified at his approach, advanced as far as Orvieto to meet him, and placed himself in his hands; a confidence which was repaid by the pope on his entrance into Pérousa on the 13th of September, by the restoration of his patrimonial property, with permission to reside as a private citizen in the city which he had hitherto ruled; while to the city itself he restored its republican administration under the control and direction of the holy see. The Prince Bentivoglio proved less amenable to the pontifical pleasure, and calculated upon

that assistance from France for which he had paid so heavy a price; nor is it doubtful that Louis himself, on recovering from his first panic at the unforeseen movement of the pope, would have willingly afforded it; as on hearing that Julius had announced in public that he could calculate upon the support of the French monarch in his attack upon Bologna, Louis vehemently denied that he had given any pledge to that effect. The Cardinal d'Amboise, however, who was anxious to avoid a rupture with the pope, so worked upon his mind that, once more falsifying a solemn engagement, he gave orders to M. de Chaumont,[1] his lieutenant-general in the Milanese, to march upon Bologna with a force of six hundred lances, and three thousand Swiss; and thus pressed on the one hand by the army of the pope, and on the other by that of his anticipated ally, Bentivoglio had no resource save to take refuge with his family in the French camp; to abandon a principality which he had inherited from his ancestors; and ultimately to accept an asylum in Milan; which, together with a guarantee for the preservation of

[1] Charles d'Amboise, Seigneur de Chaumont, lieutenant-general of the army in the Milanese at the age of twenty-five years, and grand-master, was the nephew of the Cardinal d'Amboise, by whom he was entirely governed. Naturally brave, he never ceded an inch of the territory confided to his charge, but made several conquests both in that kingdom and Venice. He nevertheless committed two serious errors: the one in permitting Chapin Vitelli and the Venetian reinforcement to enter Bologna, while he wasted a day in endeavouring to negotiate a peace; and lost the opportunity of occupying the city, and reinstating the Bentivogli; and the other, when he suffered Miranda to be taken, in spite of the resolute defence which it was making, and from motives of avarice dissolved the Italian bands. He died at the age of thirty-eight years.

his property, was tendered to him by Chaumont. Julius II. established at Bologna, as he had previously done at Pérousa, a government which was almost republican, and which continued to support itself in all its integrity until the close of the 18th century.

The revolt of Genoa, which had been annexed to the crown of France at the same time as the duchy of Milan, immediately supervened; and Chaumont had no sooner interdicted all communication between that city and Lombardy, while Yves d'Allègre marched upon Monaco in order to compel the Genoese to raise the siege of the fortress; than the rebels, thus driven to engage in an open and decided warfare with France, calculated upon the assistance of their allies to enable them to sustain so unequal a conflict. The Pope was their countryman, and, as they well knew, favourable to their interests; while Maximilian had already warned Louis not to molest the Genoese, whom he regarded as members of the empire: thus, believing themselves secure, they threw off the authority of France; and in compliance with their ancient custom, elected a new doge from among their own citizens, one Paul de Novi, a silk dyer by trade, and a man of extraordinary judgment, vigour, and decision.

Louis XII, enraged by the wanton and barbarous cruelties exercised against the French prisoners who fell into the hands of the enemy, and whom they crucified, mutilated, and tortured, without distinction of age or sex; and moreover, convinced that he owed the revolt to the machinations of the emperor Maximilian and the Pope, at once placed himself at the head of an army of 50,000 men; and, accompanied by the Dukes of Bourbon, Alençon,

and Lorraine, proceeded in person to attack the rebels. The royal forces had no sooner reached the entrance of the mountains of Genoa, than the troops whom Paul de Novi had intrusted with the defence of the defiles, fled before them, and the French encamped without opposition in the valley of Polsevera. Still, however, the city itself was enabled to offer a formidable resistance; its natural resources being so great as to render it impregnable at a period when war had not yet become a science; and the generals of Louis XII. were prepared for a long and murderous campaign. But Genoa was already divided against herself; intestine contentions had sapped her strength; the wealthy citizens, apprehensive that should the city be captured it would be delivered over to pillage, refused to offer any resistance; while the lower orders, who had eagerly taken up arms in the hope of profit, upon finding themselves forsaken by their leaders, lost courage; and although one body of men fought bravely on the height of the Belvidere, and had even, by their preparations for defence, caused considerable anxiety to Louis, it was a solitary effort; which was frustrated through the valour and intrepidity of Bayard,[1] who having been appointed equerry to the king, had accompanied him in this expedition, while still suffering from the effects of a wound received at Garigliano.

The defeat of this outpost, upon which great hopes had

[1] Pierre du Terrail, Seigneur de Bayard, surnamed "The Knight without fear and without reproach," was born near Grenoble, in 1476. This brave and loyal captain distinguished himself greatly during the wars of Italy. He defended Mezières, and died on the retreat from Romagnano, in 1525.

been based, was so complete and so rapid that it struck terror into the garrison of the citadel, who immediately abandoned their post; and although the Genoese made a vigorous attempt to re-take it, they were repulsed; and thus found themselves compelled to send deputies to the French king, to announce their submission; while Paul de Novi evacuated the city with a strong body of his companions in arms.

On the 29th of April, Louis entered the conquered city on horseback, with his drawn sword in his hand; while the magistrates and people received him on their knees, holding olive branches, and uttering loud cries for mercy. They were answered by a promise of pardon, but that pardon was far from unconditional: seventy-nine individuals having been exempted from the amnesty, and hanged upon gibbets erected in the public streets; while the city, although protected from pillage, was condemned to a fine of 300,000 florins, equal to half the amount of the national taxes of France; 100,000 of which were, however, remitted, in consequence of the utter inability of the citizens to meet the demand; but in lieu thereof a strong fortress named Codifa was constructed near the outworks at their expense; all their privileges, as well as their treaty with France, were committed to the flames; and a new municipality was finally established; while, on the 5th of June following, Paul de Novi, who had taken refuge in Corsica, and Demetrius Giustiniani, another of their generals, were also executed. Louis then disbanded his army, and with a small suite proceeded to Milan; "where," says 'the Loyal Servant,' "Gian Giacopo Trivulzio, called by the French, the Sire Jean Jacques de

Trivulce,[1] gave him one of the grandest feasts that ever was beheld in the house of a private nobleman; for, from all one can learn, there were present at it more than five hundred guests, not including ladies, of whom there were an hundred or an hundred and twenty; and it was impossible to be better entertained than they were, with dishes of the first, and of the second course, with farces, plays, and other pastimes." Moreover, another historian informs us that, at this entertainment, "the king opened the ball with the Marchioness of Mantua, and that the Cardinals of Narbonne and St. Severin were among the dancers."

Such an assurance appears startling until we remember that the higher churchmen of that period emancipated themselves without scruple from all the trammels of their holy calling; and thus while the cardinals above named joined in the *bransle*, the Bishop of Liége, an-

[1] Jean Jacques Trivulce, Marquis de Vigevano, was the representative of an ancient Milanese family, and embraced the profession of arms. He entered the service of Ferdinand I. of Aragon, king of Naples; and afterwards passed into that of Charles VIII. of France, when that prince undertook the conquest of the Milanese. It was he who delivered up Capua in 1495, and who shared the command of the vanguard with the Maréchal de Gié at the battle of Fernoua. Appointed lieutenant-general of the French army in Lombardy, he took Alessandrie, and defeated the forces of Louis Sforza, Duke of Milan. He followed Louis XII. to the conquest of the Milanese in 1499, and distinguished himsel by his bravery. The king confided to him the government of that duchy in 1500, and conferred upon him the *bâton* of Maréchal de France. Trivulce fought with honour at the battle of Agnadello; but, by his unpardonable negligence, caused the defeat of Novara. He was of great assistance to Francis I. during the war of Italy in 1515, and was in the field at Marignano. He died in 1518.

other of the thirty prelates who had accompanied the monarch to Genoa, was studying the art of war, which he afterwards practised so skilfully in the cause of Charles V.

From Milan Louis XII. proceeded to Savona, in order to have an interview with Ferdinand, who was about to resume the government of Castile, vacant by the early death of the Archduke Philip. The Spanish sovereign was accompanied by his young wife, by Germaine de Foix, and Gonsalvo di Cordova, of whose popularity he had become so jealous that he feared to leave him at Naples. The admiration and respect which Louis entertained for this great captain were shown in the reception which he gave him; nor did he appear to remember how greatly he had suffered through the very qualities which elicited his regard. At his request, the highest honour which could then be accorded to a subject was conceded to Gonsalvo, who was permitted to occupy a seat at the royal table; while towards his niece the French king exhibited a warmth of affection, which, however it might tend to advance the interests of her husband, was far from pleasing to his nobility, towards whom she conducted herself with singular haughtiness and disrespect, not even excepting her brother, the young Duke de Nemours; showing herself, upon every occasion, as inimical to the French as though she had been born of another and an antagonistic nation.

Louis had been desirous, during his sojourn in Italy, to secure an interview with the pope; but although the restless and ambitious prelate had availed himself of the French arms to subdue Bologna, and was even contem-

plating a fresh demand upon their services for the reduction of the Venetians, he affected to feel aggrieved and degraded by what he denominated the introduction of the barbarians into Italy; and, consequently, when the Cardinal d'Amboise solicited him to remain at Bologna in order to receive the French king, he immediately departed for Rome; it being no part of his policy to conciliate, where it was his ambition to command.

CHAPTER III.

[1508-12.]

JULIUS II. ENDEAVOURS TO SUBJUGATE VENICE—THE VENETIANS ATTEMPT TO PROPITIATE GERMANY AND SPAIN—TREATY BETWEEN THE FOUR GREAT POWERS—THE FRENCH ARMY RE-ENTERS ITALY—BATTLE OF AGNADELLO—SUCCESS OF LOUIS XII.—DESPAIR OF THE VENETIANS—WEAKNESS OF MAXIMILIAN—THE VENETIANS TAKE PADUA—THE SWISS DESERT—FLIGHT OF THE EMPEROR—LOUIS RETURNS TO FRANCE—HOSTILITY OF THE POPE TOWARDS FRANCE—DEFECTION OF FERDINAND—LOUIS THREATENED WITH EXCOMMUNICATION—THE POPE PROCEEDS WITH HIS ARMY TO MIRANDOLA—HEROIC DEFENCE OF THE COUNTESS FRANCESCA PICO—DEATH OF THE CARDINAL D'AMBOISE—THE POPE ENTERS INTO A LEAGUE WITH ENGLAND AND SPAIN—GALLANTRY OF GASTON DE FOIX—VICTORY OF RAVENNA—DEATH OF GASTON DE FOIX—THE FRENCH RETURN TO THE MILANESE.

CHAPTER III.

[1508-12.]

INTENT upon the subjugation of Venice, Julius II, conscious of the unpopularity of that republic with the other European states, craftily endeavoured to increase the general feeling of dislike and suspicion which had been excited by her arrogance and prosperity, into jealousy and disgust; nor was it difficult for him to attain his object. By her downfall, every other neighbouring kingdom became more or less aggrandized; and thus, having previously demanded from the senate the restoration of the possessions of the Church in Romagna, a demand with which he was aware they would not comply, and thus, by their refusal, secured the pretext which he desired for commencing hostilities; he addressed himself simultaneously to Louis, Maximilian, and Ferdinand, pointing out the several advantages to be secured by each, when they should have conquered the haughty republic against which they were leagued. His proposition was eagerly accepted; ambition and cupidity alike tended to render it palatable; plenipotentiaries were appointed; and on the pretext of arranging the settlement of the Low Countries, they met at Cambray, in October, 1508, and in the course of December, the stipulations of the treaty were concluded.

Meanwhile, the Venetians, who had been made acquainted that a league was forming against them, despatched an ambassador to Louis to expostulate with him upon this breach of faith; while they endeavoured to propitiate both Maximilian and Ferdinand, and solicited help on all sides, but ineffectually; and they at length boldly resolved to brave the danger unaided, even perilous as it appeared.

One of the conditions of this treaty stipulated that the French king should enter the Venetian territories forty days before any of the other sovereigns took the field; an arrangement which, however suspicious it appeared, did not deter Louis XII. from his project; and immediately (at the close of Easter, 1509) he placed himself once more at the head of his finest mounted troops, amounting to a force of 20,000 men, an equal number of Swiss, and a strong body of infantry, and descended into Italy. The first division of his army was commanded by Trivulzio and Chaumont; the second, by the king in person; and the third, or rear-guard, by Francis Duke de Longueville; while a number of the most distinguished captains of France, either in that or any subsequent age, followed his banner. It was, indeed, a gathering of her best chivalry; for they numbered among them Charles de Bourbon, the future Connétable; Gaston de Foix, fated to die so early and so honourably; Robert de la Mark, the Marquis de la Palice, the Scottish hero d'Aubigny, Bayard, and many other individuals of note; including the Seigneurs de Molart, Richemont, Vendenesse, and La Crote, the Comte de Roussillon, the Captain Odet, and

the Cadet de Duras, who were each accompanied by their separate band of followers.

The royal army passed the Adda without molestation, but were compelled to retreat before the Count of Pitigliano, who drove out the French garrisons of Trevi and Rivolta, and sacked both those cities; a fact which decided Louis immediately to force the Venetians to an engagement. The rashness of their general, d'Alviano, seconded his wishes, despite the opposition of Pitigliano, who refused to act in concert with him, and actually retreated with a portion of his cavalry. The admirable position of d'Alviano's troops enabled him to make a very successful attack, the nature of the ground not permitting the French horse to lend any efficient aid; and, for a brief interval, the main body, or *battle* as it was then called, which was led by Louis in person, was in considerable jeopardy; when a skilful movement of the rear-guard, commanded by Bayard, robbed the enemy of their advantage, and enabled the cavalry to advance to their support. D'Alviano fought with desperation, and was severely wounded several times during the conflict; but it was not until he saw fourteen or fifteen thousand of his best troops lying dead upon the field, that he suffered himself to be made prisoner by the young Seigneur de Vandenesse, and conducted to the lodging of the king. This battle, so glorious to the French arms, took place in a village called Agnadello, on the 14th of May, 1509.

Success continued to attend the French army; and although Louis remained a couple of days upon the field, he had, within a fortnight, possessed himself of the dis-

tricts of Ghiara d'Adda and Caravaggio. On the 17th of May, Bergamo sent the keys of the city, and laid them at his feet, while the citadel only held out three days longer. Caravaggio was taken by assault, its inhabitants hanged from the battlements; and not only the garrison, but even the citizens of Peschiera, which had attempted to defend itself, were put to the sword without exception, although some among them offered a heavy ransom for their lives. Louis XII, exasperated by their opposition, refused all mercy, declaring that he would, by striking terror into his enemies, preserve himself from all future attempts at rebellion;—a resolution which was received with much dissatisfaction by his nobility, who were indignant to see gentle blood thus wantonly spilled by the desecrating hand of the executioner. Brescia, Crema, and the fortress of Pizzighettona, were his next conquests; and, finally, the citadel of Cremona, having held out for fifteen days after the city had surrendered, capitulated in its turn. Thus, before the termination of the month, Louis XII. once more found himself in possession of all that portion of the Venetian territory which had been apportioned to him by the treaty of Cambray; and which augmented the royal revenues of the duchy of Milan by the enormous sum of two hundred thousand ducats.

The haughty republic, reduced to utter despair, used every effort to propitiate the powers which were leagued against her; and Louis, although his own task was ended, remained two months longer in Italy, in order to watch the progress of events. The Pope at once rejected the overtures of the humbled senate; and

only replied to their petition by sending an army into Romagna, under the command of his nephew, Francisco-Maria de la Rovéra,[1] Duke d'Urbino, who in the course of a few days made himself master of Faenza, Rimini, Ravenna, and Cervia; while Maximilian, who had hitherto been delayed by want of funds from aggressive measures, prepared to attack Trevisa; which had, however, through his enforced tardiness, secured time for resistance. The king of Spain obtained by cession both Brindici and Otranto in his own kingdom of Naples; and the keys of Verona, Vicenza, and Padua, which had been delivered to Louis, were by him transferred to the emperor. The Duke of Ferrara, who had joined the invading armies on the 30th of May, possessed himself without resistance of Polésina de Rovigo, Este, Montagnana, and Monselica, the ancient patrimony of his family; and the Marquis of Mantua occupied Asola and Lunato, which had been adjudged to him. Finally, Ferdinand had at last undertaken the siege of Trani; and the Venetians had ordered their generals to deliver up to the Spaniards all the territory which they still held in the kingdom of Naples.

Venice, thus dismembered, was considered to be totally

[1] Francesco-Maria de la Rovéra was one of the greatest captains of the age, and was the representative of an illustrious Italian family, which owed its original celebrity to the fact that it gave two popes to Rome, viz. Sixtus IV. and Julius II; the latter of whom obtained for his brother the hand of the daughter of the Duke d'Urbino; and caused his nephew, the subject of the present note, to be adopted by the last Duke d'Urbino, of the family of Montefeltro. He married Eleonora Hippolyta de Gonzago; and died by poison in 1538, aged 48 years.

subjugated. The weakness and vacillation of Maximilian, however, tended once more to give them hope. He had no army; all his monetary resources, great as they had recently been, were utterly exhausted; while, too suspicious to entrust his ministers with the conduct of public affairs, and professing to be sufficient to himself, no one could fathom his ultimate designs, and thus all his measures were futile and perplexed; and he spent his time in hurrying from one frontier to the other, harassing his attendants, and accomplishing nothing. On receiving the keys of Padua he had sent only eight hundred lansquenets to form its garrison, a force totally inadequate to such a duty, the city being six miles in circumference; and the Venetians were no sooner apprised of this fact, than they determined to retake it, which they did by stratagem, and with great bloodshed, the lansquenets destroying about fifteen hundred of the citizens and soldiery, before they were themselves killed to a man.

The Count de Pitigliano was immediately apprised of this event; and, with the survivors of Agnadello, hastened to throw himself into the city, exerting all his energies to repair and fortify it, and resolving to defend it to the last; a resolution which enraged the tardy Maximilian, who vowed to go thither in person, and avenge himself: but when he arrived before the gates, he found himself without men, money, or courage to undertake such a task single-handed; and accordingly he applied to Louis for assistance; who, being on the point of recrossing the Alps on his return to France, did not allow the temporary prosperity of the Venetians to delay his journey; but contented himself with leaving on the frontier of

Verona, five hundred French lances, under the command of the Marquis de la Palice, with orders to march to the succour of the emperor, should he require their aid; a concession to which he was influenced by the hope that Maximilian, crippled for want of money, might be induced to sell to him Verona and its dependent territory to the banks of the Adige, which he was desirous to secure as a safe frontier to the duchy of Milan.

Chancing to encounter Bayard as he was quitting the castle to obey these orders, M. de la Palice invited him to join the expedition; to which he joyfully consented. The departure of Louis had, however, inspired the Venetians with new confidence; they materially strengthened the garrison of Padua, retook Vicenza, and were marching upon Verona, when the French general compelled them to retreat, and once more to evacuate Vicenza; but the courage and success of the French captains was neutralized by the imbecile conduct of Maximilian, who, full of great projects, suffered present opportunity to escape him. Moreover, the Swiss mercenaries, who formed a very considerable portion of his force, deserted in great numbers; and he at length abandoned all further effort, and, with a pusillanimity which disgusted his whole army, decamped suddenly in the night, with a few of his personal attendants; leaving his generals to raise the siege, and retreat as they best could.

On the return of Louis XII. to France, the queen advanced as far as Grenoble to welcome him, accompanied by Francis, duke de Valois, and his sister Marguerite; an attention to which she was the rather urged by the peculiarity of her position, which enabled her to render

it the more marked and welcome to Louis; for Anne de Bretagne was once more full of hope. She was about again to become a mother; and she was anxious to rejoin her royal husband before her hour of trial and, as she trusted, of triumph also, should arrive. The result, however, offered only a new disappointment in the birth of a second princess, Madame Rénée de France. The king did not, as had been anticipated, take up his residence in the capital, but proceeded at once to Blois; and merely visiting Paris at long intervals, held his court at the former place, or at Tours, Bourges, and Lyons; occasionally making a brief sojourn in Normandy or Brittany. Nor had he long returned to his own kingdom before he began to experience great inconvenience and uneasiness from the effects of the treaty of Cambray. The pope, whom he had in some degree constrained to second his views, had never forgiven what he considered as the undue and excessive exercise of his power; while he was compelled to perceive that he had destroyed the equilibrium of Italy by subjecting the Neapolitans to the supremacy of Spain, and putting the Germans in possession of Venice. The Swiss had, moreover, demanded from Louis an increase of pay, to which he was unwilling to accede; a circumstance which encouraged Julius to make an effort to detach them from his service; and in this attempt he readily succeeded through the medium of a crafty churchman, named Matthew Scheiner, the nephew of the bishop of Sion, whom he created cardinal under the same title; and whose impassioned eloquence and martial spirit soon enabled him to induce a belief among them that a war with Louis XII. would

be as acceptable in the eyes of Heaven as a crusade against the infidels. It was not long, therefore, ere they consented to make a descent upon Italy, as the servants of the church; and thus the French king saw himself not only deprived of their assistance, but even called upon to include them among his enemies.

Ferdinand, true to his treacherous and truckling character, having made his profit of the treaty of Cambray, renounced it without a single scruple; and entered into a league with the pope, urging upon his son-in-law the king of England the expediency of following his example; and accepting from the warlike pontiff a full investiture of the kingdom of Naples.

Thoroughly awakened to a sense of the evil which threatened him on all sides, Louis would gladly have taken the field, and defied the pope and his allies, with the single aid of Maximilian; but the instability of that prince rendered such a measure hazardous, and he consequently resolved, as a more judicious medium, to call a council of his own prelates at Tours; and to demand of them if Julius II. had the right to levy a war of which neither religion nor the interests of the church were the ostensible objects; or if opposition to a conflict purely secular in its interests might not be righteously opposed. The reply of the council was favourable to his wishes; the king was authorized by its unanimous voice to act on the offensive as well as the defensive; and was, moreover, assured that any papal excommunication which the war might induce would be null and void; while, in addition to this solemn decision, they raised a large subsidy on the church possessions in furtherance of his views.

Meanwhile the pope, who appeared to disregard both his age and his infirmities where his ambition was enlisted, and who was extremely anxious to repossess himself of the duchy of Ferrara, assembled a considerable army; and in the midst of one of the most severe winters which had ever been experienced in Italy, proceeded in person to Mirandola, where he forgot for a time the churchman in the soldier; encouraged and superintended the labourers in the trenches; and to the dismay of the cardinals by whom he was accompanied, not only directed the planting of the artillery, but even commanded the assaults, and exposed himself with the greatest recklessness until a breach was effected, which, owing to the moat being deeply frozen, rendered all further defence on the part of the besieged impossible. On arriving at Santo Felice, a large village near Mirandola, Julius had despatched a herald to the Countess Francesca, the natural daughter of Gian Giacopo Trivulgio, and widow of Ludovico Pico, to summon her to deliver up the city into his hands; but she resolutely refused to betray her trust; nor was it until the breach was effected that she surrendered.

From Mirandola the pope turned his arms against Ferrara, and again attacked Bologna; but failing in his attempt, returned to Ravenna.

The death of the Cardinal d'Amboise, which occurred at Lyons on the 25th of May, 1510, where Louis XII. was then holding his court in order to keep a strict eye upon the events transpiring in Italy, was a heavy blow to the French monarch, who resolved thenceforward to govern in his own person; a determination which proved

fatal to his administration; and meanwhile the pope perfected a league which he dignified with the title of "Holy," and in which he prevailed upon Ferdinand to join, and on Henry VIII. to accede; while the Swiss were engaged to attack the Milanese.

Louis XII. met this emergency with a kingly spirit: his army in Italy was augmented, and he made every preparation for resisting the combination which had been formed against him. Gaston de Foix, Duke de Nemours, his nephew, was appointed general of his forces, although yet a mere youth who had not attained his twenty-third year; and the result justified the confidence which had been placed in him. He saved Bologna, which the papal troops were about to besiege; and had not his little army been exhausted by forced marches in the most inclement weather, would have had an opportunity of utterly defeating the combined forces of the league. He had, however, scarcely taken possession of Bologna when he learnt that the city of Brescia had been treacherously delivered over to the Venetians, and that the garrison was incapable of long resistance; upon which, with incredible exertion and fatigue, he hastened to the rescue of that place; fought two battles, achieved two victories, and on arriving before the gates, summoned the city to surrender, being anxious if possible to avoid further slaughter. The summons was, however, disregarded, although the citizens were desirous that it should be complied with; the attack commenced, and the carnage which ensued was fearful. The Venetians fought desperately, but in vain. The city was taken; the garrison

and population put to the sword, and the town delivered up to all the horrors of pillage and violence. Bayard fell wounded by a pike through the thigh, which broke in the wound, and was borne to the rear by two archers; the citizens, women, and children harassed the invading troops by hurling bricks and stones, and even pouring boiling water from the windows of the houses; but ultimately, between seven and eight thousand of the Venetians fell in action, or were butchered as they attempted to escape; while the loss of the French did not exceed fifty men. Unhappily, these no sooner saw themselves masters of the city than the most brutal excesses supervened. Monasteries and convents were invaded, private families were ruined and disgraced, and the gross booty secured by the conquerors was estimated at three millions of crowns; a circumstance which ultimately proved the destruction of the French cause in Italy; numbers of the individuals thus suddenly enriched forsaking their posts and returning to their homes; enfeebling the army of De Foix, and conducing to the fatal termination of the battle of Ravenna.

Apprehensive, despite the brilliant commencement of this campaign, that the coalition formed against him might prove too powerful to admit of his ultimate success, Louis XII. forwarded instructions to the young prince to compel the enemy to a speedy engagement before the impression produced by his recent good fortune had time to become weakened; and, in obedience to this command, the duke advanced upon Ravenna by Finale and Modena; but his eagerness to engage the army of the league was not greater than the determination of

Raymond de Cardona, the Viceroy of Naples,[1] to evade the encounter. Near Bologna he was joined by the Duke of Ferrara, whom he appointed, in conjunction with La Palice, to the command of the vanguard; and this arrangement made, he advanced to Castel St. Piero, where he was met by the combined armies of the pope and the King of Spain. The Cardinal de' Medici (afterwards Leo X.) was the supreme head of the adverse forces, of which the military command was entrusted to Cardona, Fabrizio Colonna,[2] and the Marquis de Pescara.

"They formed one of the finest armies for its size," says the Loyal Servant, "that hath ever been seen, and one of the best appointed. Don Raymunda de Cardona, Viceroy of Naples, was at the head of it, and had with him twelve or fourteen hundred gendarmes, whereof eight hundred rode barbed horses. They were all gold and azure, and mounted on the best chargers and Spanish horses that were ever beheld. Moreover, for the space of two years, they had enjoyed the free range of Romagna, a good and fertile land, where they had provisions to their hearts' desire. There were only twelve thousand foot; two thousand foot under the charge of a Captain *Ramassot*, and ten thousand Spaniards, Biscayens, and Navarrese, conducted by the Count Pietro

[1] Raymond de Cardona was a man of great personal beauty and insinuating address, but devoid of both courage and experience. The pope generally spoke of him as *Madame* Cardona.

[2] Fabrizio Colonna was a celebrated general. He was the son of Edvardo Colonna, Duke d'Amalfi, and served in the armies of the king of Naples, by whom he was appointed Constable. He commanded the vanguard at the battle of Ravenna, where he was taken prisoner. He died in 1520.

da Navarro,[1] who was captain-general of the whole body of infantry. He had formerly led his men into Barbary against the Moors, and with them had gained two or three battles. In short, they were all men experienced in war, and skilled to a marvel in the exercise of arms."

This brilliant army waited under the walls of Faenza until the French general should take the initiative, which he speedily did; and, after having despatched Bayard to reconnoitre the enemy's position, he at once prepared to give them battle. Cardona, acting upon the advice of Pietro da Navarro, had resolved to keep within the entrenchments, but the guns of the French soon compelled him to abandon this attempt; and they were no sooner forced than the engagement became general. For eight weary hours the work of carnage went on; but the Viceroy of Naples, soon losing faith in the success of his troops, took flight early in the day, with a number of his cavalry; and never drew bit until he had reached Ancona, a distance of nearly thirty leagues.

The Duke de Nemours was no sooner apprized of this

[1] Pietro da Navarro was born in Biscay, and was originally a sailor; he afterwards served as *valet-de-pied* to the Cardinal of Aragon; and finally enlisted in the Florentine army, where he became conspicuous for his bravery. Gonsalvo de Cordova employed him in the Neapolitan war, with the rank of Captain; and the emperor recompensed him for his services, at the taking of the capital, with the title of Count d'Alveto, and the proceeds of that property. He failed in a naval expedition against the Moors in Africa; and was taken prisoner at the battle of Ravenna. Two years subsequently, he entered into the service of Francis I, and distinguished himself upon several occasions until 1522, at which period he was made captive by the imperial troops. Retaken a second time by the same enemies in 1528, he died at the Château d'Œuf, in which he was confined.

fact than he sent the Sire Louis d'Ars and Bayard in pursuit of the fugitives, many of whom were overtaken and cut to pieces. The infantry, meanwhile, remained firm; but after having received the murderous fire of the artillery of the Duke of Ferrara, as well as that of the French themselves, they became shaken; although not until the French foot, which had been exposed throughout the whole action, while their enemies were partially covered by the ditch, had lost thirty-eight out of the forty captains who accompanied them to the field.

When he saw them waver, the impetuosity of Fabrizio Colonna could no longer be controlled; he beheld not only his own safety, but also that of the brave men who followed him, perilled by the cowardice of the recreant Cardona, whom he stigmatized as the "Miscreant Moor;" and, disregarding the orders of Navarro, he passed out of the camp with a small body of cavalry, and entered the open plain, boldly charging the centre of the French forces. It was, however, too late; his troops were already enfeebled, and the enemy were masters of the field. After a desperate but hopeless conflict, during which the archers of the guard, being unable in the *mêlée* to make use of their legitimate weapons, availed themselves of the small axes which they carried in their belts, and with which they made fearful havoc, the fortune of the day was soon decided. Colonna himself was made prisoner by Alphonso d'Este,[1] who, subse-

[1] Alphonso d'Este succeeded his father in 1505. His first wife was Anne, sister of Galéas Sforza, duke of Milan; and his second, the celebrated Lucretia Borgia, daughter of pope Alexander VI. He was a member of the League of Cambray, when Julius II. appointed him standard-bearer of the Roman Church. He retook the Polésina de Rovigo from the Venetians, and never would adopt their

quently, granted him both liberty and life; and among the other captives of note were the Cardinal de' Medici, Count Pietro da Navarro, the Marquises de la Paluda and Pescara, with many others of less mark; while their slain amounted to nearly sixteen thousand men, among whom were many of their bravest leaders.

Nevertheless the victory of Ravenna was a melancholy triumph for the French arms, and bought by some of the best blood of the nation. Two companies of the enemy who had been successfully engaged with some Gascon and Picardy troops, and who were anxious to make their way to Ravenna, were encountered by the Bastard du Tay, and compelled to retreat along the canal. During this movement some of the number fled; one of whom chancing to pass near the Duke de Nemours, and anxious to escape from this new danger, answered his inquiry by declaring that the Spaniards had beaten them; an announcement which maddened the young prince, who had long ere this considered the victory no longer doubtful; and who, rendered desperate by his fears, sprang upon the causeway by which the two bands were retreating, accompanied only by fourteen or fifteen gendarmes. Unfortunately the fugitives had reloaded their firelocks, which they instantly discharged, and then rushed upon the little party with their pikes. The position of the duke and his followers did not admit of their defending themselves with any effect, the causeway being narrow,

interests. Excommunicated, and declared dispossessed of the principality of Ferrara, he only escaped the vengeance of Julius II. by a timely flight. He died in 1534, after having reconquered Bondeno, Finale, San-Felice, Garfagnano, Lugo, Bagnacavallo, Reggio, Rubiera, and Modena. He was immortalized by Ariosto.

and bordered on one hand by the canal, and on the other by an impassable ditch; but they, nevertheless, struggled bravely to the last; nor did they yield until every man was either killed or disabled. The duke's horse was hamstrung; upon which he flung himself to the ground, and continued the fight on foot; Adet de Foix, Sire de Lantrec, who was beside him, defended him with his own body until he fell covered with wounds; and he then exerted all his remaining strength in calling out to the Spaniards to spare the life of the prince, who was the brother of their queen. The appeal, however, was made in vain; and the unhappy young hero fell covered with wounds. "From the chin to the forehead," says the Loyal Servant with affectionate simplicity; "he had fourteen or fifteen; clear proof that the gentle prince had never turned his back."

Thus, in his twenty-third year fell the brave Gaston de Foix, by the hands of a small band of fugitives, in whom his very name inspired terror. Within three months he had gained four battles; the future was bright before him; he was the idol of the army which he led; and secret treaties had already been set on foot to secure to him the kingdom of Naples. But now all was over; and the maimed and disfigured corpse was borne through the camp, amid the tears and lamentations of those who had so lately thrilled at his battle-cry.

The brave young Sire de Viverots, the only son of the Seigneur Yves d'Allègre, who was in the train of the prince, fell mortally wounded into the canal, where he perished miserably; and his father also perished during a charge of infantry. Lantrec, although grievously wounded, ultimately recovered; but the slaughter in the French

army was estimated at six thousand men; among whom were many great and noble names. Well might Louis XII, when congratulated upon the conquest of Ravenna, exclaim, in the regret and sadness of his spirit: "Wish my enemies such victories!"

On the day after the battle, the French adventurers and lansquenets pillaged the ill-fated city, despite the opposition of the Sire de la Palice, who had been unanimously elected general-in-chief of the army after the death of Gaston de Foix. Ravenna had capitulated; and he had consequently been anxious to spare to its inhabitants the horrors of a sack; his anxiety was, however, unavailing; the volunteers and mercenaries of his army entered the gates by stratagem, and the unhappy and conquered citizens were outraged and despoiled.

At this juncture intelligence reached the French army from the Seigneur Trivulzio, that the Venetians and Swiss were contemplating a descent upon the duchy of Milan, and that suspicions were entertained of the good faith of the emperor; upon which it was decided that they should immediately return to the Milanese, carrying with them the body of Gaston, which was interred within the Dome with regal pomp; upwards of ten thousand mourners following it to the grave, the greater number mounted, and in deep sables; while forty standards, which had been captured from the enemy, were borne before him trailing in the dust, and his own banners held aloft immediately in the rear, as emblematic of their triumph over these prostrate trophies.

The battle of Ravenna cost Louis XII. one of the brightest jewels of his Crown.

CHAPTER IV.

[1513.]

EFFECTS OF THE BATTLE OF RAVENNA—RELIGIOUS SCRUPLES OF THE QUEEN —THE POPE RAISES A FORCE IN SWITZERLAND — THE EMPEROR WITHDRAWS HIS SUBJECTS FROM THE FRENCH ARMY — MAXIMILIAN SFORZA ENTERS MILAN—THE GENOESE REVOLT—LORD DORSET LANDS IN SPAIN—IS DISGUSTED, AND WITHDRAWS—INTRIGUES OF FERDINAND—LOUIS XII. INVESTS FRANCIS WITH THE COMMAND OF THE ARMY OF THE MILANESE —THE SPANISH GENERAL DECLINES HIS CHALLENGE—THE FRENCH RAISE THEIR CAMP BEFORE PAMPELUNA—AND REPASS THE ALPS—LIGHT-HEARTEDNESS OF FRANCIS—A PRINCE AND AN ADVOCATE—LICENTIOUSNESS OF FRANCIS—ANCIENT NOTIONS OF PIETY—FRANCE ENTERS INTO A LEAGUE WITH THE VENETIAN STATES—TREATY OF MARRIAGE BETWEEN THE ARCHDUKE CHARLES AND THE PRINCESS RÉNÉE—UNION OF VENICE WITH FRANCE—DEATH OF JULIUS II.—ACCESSION OF LEO X.—HIS ENMITY TO FRANCE—LOUIS XII. ENDEAVOURS TO PROPITIATE HIM, BUT FAILS—HE CONCLUDES A TRUCE WITH FERDINAND AND THE VENETIANS—THE SWISS TAKE UP ARMS AGAINST FRANCE—FERDINAND AND HENRY VIII. JOIN THE CAUSE OF THE POPE—LOUIS AGAIN INVADES THE MILANESE—TAKES THE PRINCIPAL CITIES—BATTLE OF VIVEGANO—THE FRENCH ARE DRIVEN FROM THE MILANESE—LOUIS MORTGAGES A PORTION OF THE CROWN LAND—HENRY VIII. INVADES FRANCE, AND BESIEGES TEROUENNE—LOUIS PROCEEDS TO CALAIS—BAYARD CAPTURES AN ENGLISH GUN—FAMINE IN THE CITY—MAXIMILIAN JOINS THE ENGLISH KING—THE BATTLE OF THE SPURS—BAYARD WINS HIS RANSOM—HONOURS RENDERED TO BAYARD BY MAXIMILIAN AND HENRY VIII.—LOUIS WITHDRAWS HIS ARMY INTO PICARDY.

CHAPTER IV.

[1513.]

THE consternation created in France by the dearly-bought victory of Ravenna, was not less deep in Rome. The holy conclave saw, in the success of the French arms, the ultimate subjugation of Italy; and were alarmed accordingly. Bitter as the concession could not fail to be, they urged the pope to offer terms to Louis, which might avert the evil; and Julius appeared inclined to satisfy their wishes; but at that precise juncture, the arrival of Giulio de' Medici at Rome once more determined him to pursue his own designs. He came on a mission from his cousin the captive cardinal, whom he had visited in his prison, after having himself fled from the field with Cardona; and now hastened to see the pope, in the name of his relative, and to represent to him the crippled condition of the French army, bereft of its general. He found instant attention. Julius had already secured the support of the vacillating Maximilian; he was aware that Louis, continually harassed by the pious scruples of the queen—who, never having regained her health after the birth of the princess Rénée, either felt, or affected to feel, that her sufferings were a

consequence of the unholy and sacrilegious warfare in which he was engaged—would gladly terminate the struggle; and, accordingly, he refused all overtures towards a reconciliation; and instructed the cardinal of Sion to raise as many Swiss troops as might offer themselves, in order to effect a descent into the Milanese, under the specious pretext of restoring the duchy to the young Maximilian Sforza, the son of Ludovic the Moor.[1]

The Swiss answered readily to the call of the pope, and engaged themselves to the number of twenty thousand in his service; while Maximilian, although still considered as the ally of France, and the enemy of the Venetians, did not hesitate to accord to the latter, on the receipt of an equivalent in money, a truce of ten months; with permission for the Swiss to march through his territories, in order to join them in their attack upon the army of Louis.

La Palice, who had succeeded to the command on the death of the Duke de Nemours, made every preparation

[1] Ludovic-Maria Sforza, surnamed the Moor, in consequence of his dark complexion, put to death Simonetta, the tutor of his nephew, Guan-Galéazo, and exiled the regent, Bona de Savoie, in order to govern in the name of his young relative. Irritated by the threats of the king of Naples, the father-in-law of the duke, he invited Charles VIII. to enter Italy, hoping to retain the Milanese by a promise to support him in his attempt at the conquest of Naples. Guan-Galéazo having died by poison in 1494, Ludovic caused himself to be recognised as duke of Milan, to the prejudice of the son of that prince; but, ere long, alarmed by the successes of the French, he leagued himself with the other Italian states against them, and compelled them to repass the Alps. A second invasion of the French under Louis XII. dispossessed him of his duchy. He was taken prisoner before Novara, and conveyed to France, where he lived ten years a captive in the castle of Loches. He died in 1510.

for resistance; but his exertions were rendered nugatory by the fact that, on the day which succeeded his occupation of the fortress of Pontevico, as a central position whence he could communicate with the other divisions of his army, a letter arrived from the emperor, commanding all his subjects to withdraw from the French service; and as a considerable portion of his troops were German lansquenets, M. de la Palice at once saw himself rendered powerless, and was enabled with difficulty to retreat to Ast. The young archduke Maximilian entered Milan without opposition; the Genoese revolted, and elected as their doge one of the Fregosi, a declared enemy to France; and the vaunt of Julius, that he would expel the barbarians from Italy, was at length accomplished.

Nor was the loss of the Milanese the only subject of disquietude to which Louis was at this period exposed. Ferdinand of Spain, who was anxious to possess himself of Navarre, had entered into a negotiation with Henry VIII, in which he pretexted a desire to regain Guienne, to which England still affected a claim; and solicited a passage through the kingdom of Navarre, which was refused, upon the plea that the king had resolved to observe a strict neutrality. The Marquis of Dorset, who had already landed in Spain with a force of fifty thousand men, and marched towards the French frontier, was no sooner apprised of this circumstance, than he applied to the Spanish king for further instructions; when Ferdinand, who had only sought for help from England in order to effect the conquest of Navarre, of which Jean d'Albret was the sovereign in right of his wife, the spirited but unfortunate Catherine de Foix, endeavoured

to impress upon the English general the necessity of conquering that country before the attempt upon Guienne could be accomplished; a proof of perfidy which so disgusted the marquis, that he at once abandoned his cause, and withdrew with his troops, who had already suffered severely from the effects of the climate.

Nevertheless Ferdinand pursued his purpose, and demanded from the Navarrese sovereigns that they should place in his hands either the Prince de Viane their son, or all the fortified places throughout their dominions, as a guarantee that they would offer no assistance to France against the Holy League; but Jean d'Albret, aware that he could place no reliance upon the word of the Spanish king, after having in vain protested his intention of remaining neuter, and perceiving that the Duke of Alba was advancing into his territories at the head of the Aragonnese army, caused his queen to retire to Bearn, and threw himself into Pampeluna, where he awaited in vain for a time the arrival of succour from France. Nor did he even find support from his own subjects, who, far from taking up arms in defence of their country, talked only of submission; and he at length found himself compelled to retreat beyond the Pyrenees, when Pampeluna opened its gates to the Duke of Alba, an example which was followed by all the cities of Spanish Navarre, within the space of a few days.

Louis XII, even disheartened as he was by a series of reverses which had overthrown all the previous glory of the French arms; driven from Italy; shorn of his allies, all of whom had suffered like himself; and menaced upon his frontiers, by the Emperor, the Swiss,

the Low Countries, England, and Spain; could not, however, see the King of Navarre, whose allegiance to himself had been the alleged pretext for his overthrow, thus made the spoil of his treacherous enemy; and he accordingly marched an army to his assistance, under the joint command of the dukes of Bourbon and Longueville;[1] but as these two powerful nobles could not agree upon points of precedence, and their misunderstanding was likely to injure the interests of the expedition, Louis decided upon investing the young Duke de Valois with the supreme command.

Inflamed by the glorious example of the youthful Gaston de Foix, his predecessor, Francis eagerly assumed the post thus tendered to him; and had no sooner reached the camp than he marched the French forces to Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port, of which Colonel Villalva had possessed himself, and where the Duke of Alba had shortly afterwards taken up his position with the whole of his army. The troops, which had lately evacuated Italy, joined the forces of the Duke de Valois; and La Palice, their most experienced general, became his counsellor.

On arriving near the position of the enemy, Francis endeavoured to force them to an engagement; and for this purpose sent a message of defiance to the Spanish general, which was, however, declined; whereupon La Palice seized the pass of the valley of Roncal, one of the mediums of communication between Navarre and

[1] The Duke de Longueville was a descendant of the famous illegitimate branch of the house of Orleans, originating in the brave Jehan, Count de Dunois, the natural son of Louis, Duke d'Orleans, brother of Charles VI.

Bearn; and in the course of the month of October, conducted one of the three divisions of the French army by this defile within two leagues of Pampeluna, under the nominal command of the King of Navarre; while the Duke de Bourbon overran Guipuscoa, taking and demolishing several fortified places; and the remaining division held the Duke of Alba in check at Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port. Nevertheless, the Spanish general succeeded in occupying Roncevaux a few hours before La Palice, and thence marched into Pampeluna, where he was besieged by the French troops. It was, however, too late to retrieve the fatal mistake which had been made in suffering him to reach the city. The weather had become severe, snow had fallen to a great depth, provisions were scarce and uncertain, and the roads almost impassable for artillery. Moreover the Aragonnese were advancing on all sides to support the besieged city; and after a few inconsequent skirmishes, the French were compelled to strike their camp, and to demolish the battery which they had raised, in order to repass the Pyrenees: an effort which they only accomplished at the expense of their heavy baggage, and thirteen cannon taken by the Spaniards during their retreat.

Unpropitious as the campaign had proved, it had at least enabled the young prince to display alike the talent and the courage which gave earnest of his future prowess; and he was received on his return with all the honour due to a more successful general. The gloom which overhung the nation could not quell the animal spirits consequent upon his youth and tempera-

ment; and while his royal uncle was absorbed in anxiety and irresolution as to the new alliance which it had become imperative upon him to form either with the Emperor or the Venetians, in order to make head against the enemies by whom he was threatened, Francis entered with enthusiasm into all the amusements of the capital; and at the head of a reckless band of young nobles, indulged himself in every species of dissipation.

The extreme youth of his affianced wife offering no check to his libertine propensities, they soon became uncontrollable; and it was at this period that he formed a *liaison* which affords upon several points so perfect an insight into his character that it cannot be passed over in silence.

A certain advocate in Paris, whose professional acumen and skill had secured to him an immense reputation, had married, in the decline of life, a beautiful young girl of eighteen or nineteen years of age, whose parents, dazzled by the wealth and station of the suitor, had induced her to bestow her hand upon him. Unfortunately for both parties, she acted only up to the strict letter of her bond; and, although surrounded by luxury and indulgence, rather tolerated than loved the husband who had thus been forced upon her. Nevertheless, although fond of pleasure and admiration, her conduct had been sufficiently circumspect to satisfy the worthy advocate; who, conscious that he was no longer of an age to command the devotion of a young and pretty woman, suffered her to participate in all the amusements which were offered to her acceptance without objection or mistrust. It chanced, however, that at a marriage festival

she was remarked by the young Duke de Valois, who, although only in his sixteenth year, had already began to yield to that passionate admiration of female beauty, which throughout life formed one of the distinguishing features of his character; and who, despite the indulgent testimony of Madame d'Alençon and Brantôme, his uncompromising panegyrists, sacrificed to this licentious propensity, not only his sense of personal dignity, but even his respect for religion, the semblance of which he did not scruple to assume in order to veil his irregularities. Upon the occasion just named, the prince made the acquaintance of the fair citizen; nor did he hesitate before the close of the evening to declare to her the passion with which she had inspired him. The young beauty listened without displeasure, for she was aware of the rank of her new admirer, and her vanity was flattered by such a conquest; nor was it long ere she yielded to his passionate protestations so far as to consent to receive him under the roof of her husband when that husband should be from home. Accordingly a rendezvous was appointed; and the prince, disguised in order that the honour of the lady might not be unnecessarily compromised, directed his steps towards her residence, accompanied by certain of his gentlemen, whom he quitted at the entrance of the street; directing them, should they hear no noise within a quarter of an hour, to retire where they pleased, but to return during the course of the night in order to conduct him back to the palace; after which he proceeded to the house of the advocate, where he found the door unfastened, as had been previously arranged; and hastened to ascend the staircase to the apartment of the lady. It

appeared, however, that the husband, from some cause or other, had returned home unexpectedly; and the young prince had not reached the first floor ere he encountered him, taper in hand, and was aware that retreat had already become impossible. In this emergency the precocious presence of mind of Francis did not desert him for an instant; but courteously greeting the man of law with a smile upon his lips, he said in his blandest tone:

"M. l'Advocat, you know the confidence which I, and all the princes of my house, have ever placed in your probity, and that I have ever considered you to be one of my best and most faithful servants: I have, in consequence, come privately to visit you, in order to request that you will be careful of my interests; and also to beg that you will give me a draught of wine, of which I stand greatly in need; be careful, however, not to suffer any one to know that you have seen me, as I am going hence to a place where I do not wish to be recognised."

The worthy advocate, delighted that the prince should confer upon him so great a mark of condescension and esteem, was profuse in his professions and acknowledgments; and, leading the way, conducted his unexpected guest to his best apartment, where he desired his wife to set forth the best collation of fruits and sweetmeats she could collect; an order which was promptly and efficiently obeyed; and while she was thus engaged the young duke continued to converse with his host upon his private and pecuniary business, without once turning his eyes upon her after the first courtesies had been exchanged. At length, however, the lady dropped upon

her knee as she presented to him the refreshment he had required; and while her husband was pouring out a goblet of wine at the sideboard, whispered to him not to leave the house, but to conceal himself in a wardrobe on the right hand of the gallery, where she would soon join him. When he had swallowed the wine, the young prince made his acknowledgments to the advocate, took an indifferent leave of the lady, and rose to depart; but as the unsuspicious lawyer prepared to escort him, taper in hand, on his return, he stopped him with a gesture of his hand, declaring that he required no attendance, and would rather gain the street alone in darkness. Then, turning to the lady, he said courteously: "Moreover, Madam, I will not deprive you of the companionship of your good husband, who is one of my oldest servants, and whom you are very happy to possess; a happiness for which you should praise God, and both cherish and obey him; for should you do otherwise you would be very blamable." Having said these words, he withdrew, carefully closing the door behind him, in order not to be detected in his purpose; and, once enclosed in his place of retreat, awaited the promised summons of his frail conquest, who did not fail to fulfil her engagement.

Had the adventure ended here and thus, we would not have sullied our pages with its record; but such was far from being the case; the beauty and devotion of the handsome citizen had enthralled the heart of Francis; and as their *liaison* lasted for a considerable period, he became anxious to abridge the distance between them, and for this purpose passed habitually through the clois-

ters of a monastery; with whose prior he ultimately rendered himself so great a favourite that the porter was instructed to leave the gates open for him until midnight, and to give him egress at any hour when he might be required to do so. As the house of the advocate was situated in the immediate neighbourhood of this monastery, he always entered the holy pile unattended; and although he traversed it rapidly on his way to his appointment, he never failed on his return—fresh from the pollution of his orgy, and yet flushed with the fever of his sin—to remain for a considerable period in prayer in the silent chapel, to the marvel and edification of the community, who, on entering the sacred fane for matin service, constantly found him on his knees before the altar!

Divided, as we have already stated, between Maximilian and the Venetians, Louis was unable to decide upon his course of action; but, strongly urged by his council rather to trust to the good faith of the latter than to place any trust in the emperor, he at length consented; and a league defensive and offensive was entered into by France with the state of Venice, at the urgent entreaty of Trivulzio. Nevertheless, Louis, in his secret heart, still inclined towards Maximilian. He was dazzled by the imperial dignity; and influenced by Anne de Bretagne, who was ambitious to unite her second daughter, as she had previously been to marry her first, to Charles of Austria, in whom she saw a future emperor. A treaty to this effect was consequently commenced, in which it was stipulated that the Princess Rénée should convey to her husband, as her dowry, all the rights of France over

the kingdom of Naples, the duchy of Milan, and the republic of Genoa. To these conditions the emperor affected to consent; but he exacted, as a preliminary, that the young princess should be consigned to his charge, and be educated at his court;—a precaution in which he was undoubtedly authorized, when he remembered how his own marriage with Anne de Bretagne, and those of his daughter Marguerite and his grandson Charles, had been unceremoniously set aside by France. The French monarch, however, refused to accede to such terms; nor could Anne be induced, even when her ambition was aroused, to separate herself from her infant daughter.

Meanwhile the treaty with the Venetians was accomplished; and those who had so lately met as enemies were collected under the same banners. La Tremouille was appointed to the command of the forces, with which Louis still hoped to re-conquer the Milanese; and d'Alviano, who had been retained a captive since the battle of Agnadello, was restored to liberty, and placed at the head of the Venetian army.

While the approaching war was thus still in abeyance, and that it was as yet impossible to decide who would act as allies, and who as enemies, during the next campaign, Julius was indefatigable in undermining the interests of France; while he menaced, each in their turn, the Duke of Ferrara, the republics of Venice, of Lucca, of Sienna, and of Genoa; Ferdinand of Spain, the Medici at Florence, and the Baglioni at Perousa;—in short, all the powers who were not sufficiently pliable in his hands, and who disputed his entire supremacy. But in the midst of an arrogance by which the general peace of Europe

was threatened, he was seized in the spring of 1513 with a fever, followed by dysentery, which soon assumed a serious aspect; notwithstanding which, the restless and ambitious old man, so soon to be called before a tribunal from which he, even as the sovereign pontiff, had no appeal, laboured to the last in the partial completion of the work which he had so zealously commenced; and having assembled all the cardinals about him to confirm a bull which he had fulminated; and secured, so far as he was able to do so, the independence of the conclave which was to name his successor, he expired on the evening of the 21st of February, exclaiming, in his last moments; "Out with the French from Italy! Out with Alphonso d'Este!"

Although the death of Julius II. had, undoubtedly, delivered France from an implacable enemy, it still remained questionable in how far she would profit by the rule of his successor. The Cardinal de' Medici, who assumed the triple crown under the title of Leo X, was a man of high birth and acknowledged acquirements; but although on ascending the papal chair he had declared his anxiety to maintain the peace of Europe, it could not fail to be remarked that he had chosen for the ceremony of his coronation the anniversary of the very day upon which he had been made prisoner by the French at the battle of Ravenna; and that he had even rode the same horse which carried him upon that occasion. Moreover, he had not been indebted for his liberty to any respect felt by his enemies for his sacred character, as he had been rescued from the hands of Trivulzio by some insurgent peasantry; while the revolution, which had

restored to his family their rule in Florence, had been undertaken in hatred towards the French. Nevertheless Louis XII. was anxious to effect a reconciliation with the Holy See; while the queen, still more eager than himself to make her peace with the church, urged him continually to propose such terms to Leo as might tend to that result. Accordingly, the French king offered to submit the arrangement of a peace to the judgment and justice of the sovereign pontiff, on condition that no opposition should be made to his designs on Milan; however, the concession was met with evasive coldness; and Louis became at once aware that Leo X. was bent, like his predecessor, upon the expulsion of the French from Italy. He, therefore, hesitated no longer; but, concluding a treaty of peace for twelve months with Ferdinand of Spain, and ratifying that into which he had entered with the Venetian states, endeavoured once more to induce the Swiss to enter into his interests. Here, however, he was destined to disappointment; they would scarcely listen to the proposals of his ambassador; and would concede no more than that they would continue favourable to Louis so long as he attempted nothing against either the pope or the Duke of Milan, whom they had, as they affirmed, taken under their protection; and when they discovered that the French monarch, undismayed by their opposition, was resolved to enforce his claims, they at once took up arms to oppose his entrance into Italy.

Leo, meanwhile, had not been idle. With little difficulty he induced the hollow-hearted Ferdinand once more to break his faith with the French king, and even to induce Henry VIII, his son-in-law, to invade France,

and to secure the cooperation of Maximilian, by the payment of 100,000 crowns for the maintenance of his army. Yet Louis still persevered. Indignant at the bad faith of his false allies; exasperated by the cool impassibility of the pope; and more than ever anxious to regain the supremacy of the Milanese; he marched a formidable army into Italy, under the command of La Tremouille, who, fourteen years previously, had taken Milan, and made prisoner Ludovico Sforza. Nor was his confidence misplaced, for that general crossed the Alps before the Swiss were cognisant of his design, relieved Milan, and took possession of Ast and Alessandria. The star of Louis was once more in the ascendant. His fleet made themselves masters of Genoa; the Venetians attacked and gained Cremona; and everything appeared to favour the French arms, and to promise a speedy and glorious termination to the war. Ultimately La Tremouille arrived before Novara, and commenced the attack, but soon discovered that he had been premature; a breach had been effected, but at the moment when he was about to avail himself of it, he received intelligence that a strong reinforcement was coming up; when, convinced too late of the error which he had committed, and forgetting that it could now only be retrieved by pursuing the advantage he had gained, he withdrew to Vivegano, a distance of about two miles, and thus enabled the enemy to enter Novara during the night, where a council was immediately called, by which it was decided to attack the French camp. This bold resolution was acted upon without delay, and the Swiss accordingly commenced their march before midnight. Well acquainted

with the nature of the ground, and aware that the troops of La Tremouille were surrounded by marshy land, where their cavalry would be crippled and almost useless, they formed their own force, consisting entirely of foot soldiers, into two divisions, one of which was instructed to prevent the approach of the mounted troops, and the other to attack the French artillery. As daylight dawned they had taken up their position; and La Tremouille, unprepared as he was to anticipate such a demonstration, at once made every arrangement to receive them.

He soon perceived that the enemy, whose success had depended upon their celerity, had not brought a single gun into the field; and he accordingly advanced his artillery, consisting of two-and-twenty pieces, to the front of his line, under a guard of German lancers. His first fire committed great ravages among the Swiss ranks; but as the foremost men fell, their vacancies were instantly filled up from the rear; and they dashed forward gallantly to the very mouths of the cannon, and engaged with the lansquenets by whom they were supported. For two hours the battle waged fiercely; but at the termination of that period, the Germans, bravely as they had borne themselves, gave way; and the Swiss, having obtained possession of the guns, turned them against their former owners, and committed terrible slaughter. Meanwhile the cavalry had been compelled to total inaction, being hemmed in on one side by a dense wood, and on the other by a bog deeply trenched, in which the horses buried themselves to their knees at every plunge. In one instance only did they succeed in taking any share in the fortunes of the day, but that one must not pass unre-

corded. Robert de la Mark,[1] who commanded the lansquenets, and who was accompanied to the field by his two sons, the Seigneur de Fleuranges, and the Seigneur de Jamets, having lost sight of them in the *mêlée*, feeling convinced that they must be either slain or captive thus to fail him at such a moment, leaped the trenches at the head of a hundred of his own troop, and charged the Swiss so vigorously that he broke their ranks, reached the spot where his sons had been engaged, both of whom were lying on the ground disabled by their hurts, and carried them off in safety; having himself received nearly fifty wounds.

The capture of the cannon had, however, decided the issue of the battle; and La Tremouille, himself severely wounded, was compelled to order a retreat, which was not effected without great sacrifice of life. The gendarmes suffered little, as their enemies had no mounted force with which to pursue them; but the infantry were slain on all sides. The Gascons, who were the first to fly, were allowed to escape almost unimpeded; for the Swiss concentrated all their fury upon the lansquenets, the objects of their most bitter hatred, whom

[1] Messire Robert de la Mark was a soldier of distinction, surnamed the "Great Boar of the Ardennes," from the position of his estates, and his constant habit of laying waste all the territory of the emperor, and other princes in the vicinity. He was the original cause of the war between Maximilian and Louis XII, who supported him in his forays. He had adopted as his device a figure of St. Margaret, with a dragon at her feet, representing the great principle of evil; and was in the habit, when he made his orisons to this his patron saint, of burning two candles before her shrine, one of which was dedicated to herself, and the other to the dragon, declaring that "if God would not aid him, the devil would not fail to do so."

they considered as their rivals in the mercenary trade which they had so long exercised alone. Five thousand of these wretched men perished upon the field, and the remainder were compelled to surrender. A similar number of French were killed, either in action or during the retreat; for many of the Gascons, whom the Swiss had spared, were murdered by the peasantry. The loss of the victors was nearly as great, and their leader, Mottino, was among the slain; but their triumph was complete; and after remaining for an hour or two upon the scene of their success, they returned to Novara, carrying with them the twenty-two pieces of ordnance, as well as all the draught-horses and baggage of the French army.

Once more the troops of Louis XII. were driven out of Italy. All the places which they had taken opened their gates to the conquerors; and public rejoicings were held in Rome, where the pope congratulated the Swiss upon their victory; while he flattered himself that the defeat at Novara would so undermine the energies and cripple the strength of the French king, that he would be unable to contend against any new enemy. And, in truth, the prospects of Louis were anything rather than encouraging. Invaded upon every one of his frontiers, he saw himself compelled to recal the remnant of his army from the Riotta; he could place no faith in Ferdinand, and he anticipated an attack from the English upon Normandy; while, despite all his caution, the national treasury was exhausted. The campaign in Italy had been at once disastrous and expensive; Paris had been heavily taxed, and he had no resource save

in mortgaging a portion of his territory. Meanwhile Henry VIII. had raised an army of twenty-five thousand men, under the command of the Earl of Shrewsbury and Lord Talbot, in the month of May, of which the French fleet had found it impossible to impede the landing; and himself embarked to join them at the end of June, proceeding immediately from Calais to the frontier town of Térouenne, before which he sat down with his troops. The city was well fortified, and garrisoned by two hundred horse and two thousand foot, under François de Téligny, Sénéchal de Rouergué, and Antoine de Créqui, Seigneur de Pondormy; but it was ill-provisioned for a siege, and its position was consequently very precarious.

Louis XII, during his period of suspense as to the point upon which he should be attacked, had resided alternately at Paris and at Blois; but on learning that the English had landed in great strength at Calais, although suffering painfully from gout, he caused himself to be conveyed to Amiens in a litter, in order to be nearer to Louis de Hallwin, Seigneur de Piennes, who was his lieutenant-general in Picardy; and hastened to issue a stringent order to his generals not to hazard an engagement with the enemy, which, should it prove disastrous in its result, might tend to involve the ruin of the kingdom. Meanwhile the French army condensed itself at Blangy near Hesdin, where it was successively joined by M. de la Palice, Imbercourt,[1] Bayard, Aymar de Prie,

[1] Adrian de Brimeu, Marquis d'Imbercourt, was a descendant of the celebrated house of Brimeu, from which the Counts of Mégen in the Low Countries derive their origin. He was greatly distinguished for his valour, and served both Louis XII. and Francis I. with zeal and loyalty.

Bonnivet, Bonneval, La Fayette, Fontrailles,[1] with his Albanian light-horse, and Fleuranges with his lansquenets; while they still awaited the Duke of Suffolk, who had espoused the cause of Louis against Henry VIII, whom he regarded as the destroyer of his brother; a Lancasterian; and an usurper.

The English king left Calais on the 1st of August with nine thousand infantry, to join his army at Térouenne, and was encountered by all the French horse, amounting to twelve hundred lances; when, as he had no cavalry with him, the two armies had no sooner approached within cannon shot than he became apprehensive of treachery; and, dismounting, placed himself in the centre of the lansquenets. Bayard, whose gallant and impetuous spirit ill brooked the restraint which the orders of Louis had imposed upon the French troops, eagerly requested permission to attack the advancing column; declaring that, if the line were once forced, the English must be defeated; or, at the worst, as they had no horsemen, they could not follow up any transient advantage; and, in order to offer a proof of what he asserted, he broke

[1] The Sire Imbaud de Fontrailles, the representative of an ancient Gascon family, was the Colonel-General of the Albanian light-horse: a force at that period still unattempted in the French army, which was always supplied by foreigners; the gendarmes being their only national cavalry. It was from these Albanian troops that the French learnt and adopted the duties of light-horsemen. At Fornoua these troops received from the Venetians the name of *Estradiotz*, or *Corvals*, while the Spaniards called them *Genetaires*. M. de Fontrailles was also captain of a company of fifty men-at-arms; and was frequently the associate of Bayard in the skirmishes for which he was so famous.

through the rear-guard of the enemy with his own troop, and carried off one of the twelve cannon which Henry VIII. had named *the twelve apostles*. The Sire de Piennes, whose heart was with him, but who was too good a general to disobey orders, reminded him that the king his master had strictly forbidden all aggressive measures, and, therefore, reluctantly summoned him to desist; but Bayard did not relinquish his prize, which was safely conveyed to the French camp.

When, on the 2d of August, Henry joined his army before Térouenne, he was received with loud acclamations; and a few days subsequently he was joined by the Emperor Maximilian, with some thousands of Hainaulters and Burgundians; nor had a week elapsed ere a number of Flemish and other nobles from the Low Countries, despite the neutrality declared by Marguerite, flocked to his banners as volunteers.

Meanwhile, moreover, the garrison of the besieged city saw themselves threatened by famine; their provisions were nearly exhausted, and Louis XII, aware of this circumstance, instructed M. de Piennes that Térouenne must be victualled at any risk. Surrounded as it was on all sides by the enemy, this enterprise was, however, one of immense difficulty and certain danger; and, after mature consideration, it was decided that the Sire de Piennes and the Duke de Longueville should march a body of fourteen hundred horsemen to the heights of Guinegatte, to distract the attention of the enemy; while Fontrailles, with his Albanian light-horse (or stradiots) should charge the English troops at a particular point, and fling into the moat of the city the salted provisions

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and powder which they carried before them. The attempt was skilfully made and vigorously carried out. At the head of eight hundred men, the young commander charged so resolutely that he broke through the ranks of the besiegers; and, riding directly to the fosse, each man cast down the bag of powder and the pork which he bore upon his horse; and then, making face upon the enemy, succeeded in regaining the main body with a gallantry as daring as it was successful. This was, however, the only favourable moment for the French arms; and even this had met its counterpoise on the heights of Guinegatte, which the gendarmes had no sooner attained than they saw in their rear ten thousand English archers, four thousand lansquenets, and eight pieces of artillery. Maximilian had been apprised of their intended stratagem by his spies, numbers of whom were employed in both the adverse camps; while, in many instances, there were double traitors among them, who alternately served or betrayed either, as their interest prompted.

The French soldiery, who were aware that they had not been ordered to that point to come to an engagement with the enemy, retrograded at the command of their leaders, but so confusedly, that, from a trot, they soon broke into a gallop, and threw themselves pell-mell upon a rearguard of cavalry, headed by the Duke de Longueville and the Marquis de la Palice, which they scattered; and, passing through the midst, continued to fly until they reached Blandy, where the infantry were encamped, who were nearly driven, in their turn, from their position by the impetuosity of this unexpected charge. An attempt

was made by a few of their leaders to make head, with a handful of men, against the German cavalry, who were in pursuit of the fugitives; and among these the foremost were the Sire de la Palice and the Duke de Longueville. In vain, however, did the former shout, "Turn, men-at-arms, turn; this is nothing!" The alarm had spread through the whole body; the terrified troops passed on, regardless of his cry; and, although he still strove to cover the disorderly retreat of the infatuated troops, supported by some of the most gallant spirits of the army, his self-devotion, although it tended to save the French army, was unfortunate for himself and his friends, as they were nearly all taken prisoners; among others, Longueville, La Palice, Bayard, La Fayette, Clermont d'Anjou, and Bussy d'Amboise.

This flight from Guinegatte, which took place on the 15th April, 1513, obtained for the encounter the name of the Battle of the Spurs; these having been the only efficient weapons made use of by the hostile armies; very few lives were sacrificed on either side; but of the principal prisoners, M. de la Palice alone succeeded in effecting his retreat; while Bayard won his ransom in so gallant a manner that we must, to do it ample justice, give the episode in the very words of his biographer:—"The good knight without fear and without reproach retired very sorrowfully, and ever and anon turned upon his enemies with fourteen or fifteen gendarmes who had stood by him. In retreating he came to a little bridge, whereon no more than two men could pass abreast; and there was a great ditch, full of water, which came from a distance of more than half a league, and turned a mill

three furlongs further on. When he was upon the bridge he said to those that were with him:—'Gentlemen, let us stop here; for the enemy will not gain this bridge from us in the space of an hour.' Then he called one of his archers, and said to him:—'Hie you to our camp, and tell my Lord de la Palice that I have stopped the enemy short for at least half-an-hour; that during that interval he must make the forces draw up in order of battle; and let them not be alarmed, but march hither slowly; for, should the adversaries advance to the camp, and find them in this confusion, they would infallibly be defeated.'

"The archer goes straight to the camp, and leaves the good knight with the inconsiderable number of men by whom he was accompanied, guarding that little bridge, where he did all that prowess could achieve. The Burgundians and Hainaulters arrived, but were obliged to fight on the hither side of the bridge, as they could not very easily effect a passage. This gave the French, who had returned to their camp, leisure to place themselves in order, and in a posture of defence, in the event of its proving necessary. When the Burgundians found themselves withstood by such a handful of men, they cried out that archers should be sent for with all speed, and some went to hasten them. Meanwhile about two hundred cavaliers followed the course of the stream until they discovered the mill, by which they crossed. The good knight, thus enclosed on both sides, then said to his people:—'Sirs, let us surrender to these gentlemen, for all the daring we might display would avail us nothing. Our horses are weary; our adversaries are ten to one

against us, and our forces full three leagues off; so that, if we tarry but a short while longer, and the English archers come up, they will cut us to pieces.' At these words the aforesaid Burgundians and Hainaulters arrived, shouting, 'Burgundy! Burgundy!' and made a mighty onset upon the French, who, having no further means of resistance, surrendered, one here, another there, to those of most seeming consideration. While each was endeavouring to take his prisoner, the good knight espied, under some dwarf trees, a gentleman in goodly attire, who, by reason of the excessive heat he was in, whereby he was completely overcome, had taken off his helmet, and was so turmoiled and weary that he cared not to be at the trouble of taking prisoners. He spurred straight up to this person, grasping his sword, which he pointed at the other's throat, and exclaimed, 'Surrender, cavalier, or you die.' Terribly dismayed was this gentleman, for he thought that his whole company were made prisoners, and being in fear of his life, he said, 'I give myself up, then, since I am taken in this manner: but who are you?' 'I am Captain Bayard;' replied the good knight; 'who surrender to you. Here is my sword; I pray you be pleased to carry me away with you. But do me this kindness: should we meet with any English on the road who may offer to take our lives, let me have it back again.' This the gentleman promised and fulfilled; for, as they drew towards the camp, they were both obliged to use their weapons against certain English who sought to slay the prisoners; whereby they gained nothing.

"Then was the good knight conducted to the camp of the King of England, and into the tent of the gentleman by whom he had been captured, who entertained him very well for three or four days. On the fifth, the good knight said to him, 'My worthy Sir, I should be right glad if you would have me conveyed in safety to the king, my master's camp; for I am already weary of being here.' 'How say you?' asked the other; "we have not yet treated of your ransom.' '*My* ransom?' said the good knight; '*your own*, you mean, for you are my prisoner. And if, after you gave me your word, I surrendered to you, it was to save my life, and for no other reason.' Great was the amazement of the gentleman, especially when the good knight added: 'Sir, if you do not keep your word, I am confident that I shall make my escape by some means or other; but be assured that I shall insist upon doing battle with you afterward.' The gentleman knew not what reply to make, for he had heard a great deal about Captain Bayard, and by no means relished the idea of fighting with him. However, being a very courteous knight, he at length said: 'My Lord of Bayard, I am desirous of dealing fairly with you; I will refer the matter to the captains.'"

The brave but disconcerted captor scrupulously kept his word; and as the arrival of Bayard in the hostile camp soon got bruited abroad, Maximilian caused him to be summoned to his tent, and, as he entered, exclaimed gaily; "Captain Bayard, I am delighted to see you. Would to God that I had many men like yourself; for, if I had, I should not be long ere I requited the

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S. Freeman sc

THE CHEVALIER BAYARD.

"Sans Peur et Sans Reproche"

FROM A PRINT BY DE MAREYNAY AFTER AN ORIGINAL PORTRAIT IN

IN POSSESSION OF THE MARQUIS DE BRANCAS

London Richard Bentley, 1849

king your master for the good offices which he did me in times past. I believe that we formerly fought together, and I think it was then said that Bayard never fled."

"If I had done so upon this occasion, Sire;" was the proud reply; "I should not now have been here."

At this moment Henry VIII. entered the tent, to whom the emperor presented the good knight, who received their courtesies with respect and modesty; after which the peculiarity of his position was discussed; and it was decided that he should be restored to liberty unransomed, on condition that he should not bear arms for six weeks, during which time he should remain on parole, but free to reside in such Flemish cities as he should desire to visit. Bayard bent the knee in acknowledgment of this concession; and a few days subsequently took leave of the allied sovereigns, and proceeded to Flanders, where he amused himself by giving fêtes, and endearing himself to the people by the chivalry and courtesy of his deportment. In such pursuits the period of his probation rapidly wore away; and he once more girt on his armour, and joined his standard.

Meanwhile Louis had profited by the supineness of his enemies, who, instead of pursuing their advantage after the history of Térouenne, had allowed the favourable moment to escape them; and withdrew his army from Blangy into Picardy, while Henry and Maximilian returned each to his own territories.

CHAPTER V.

[1513-14.]

DIVISIONS AMONG THE FRENCH GENERALS—FRANCIS APPOINTED TO THE COMMAND OF THE NEW ARMY—TÉROUENNE CAPITULATES, AND IS DESTROYED BY HENRY VIII.—BURGUNDY REVOLTS—THE SWISS DETERMINE TO INVADE FRANCE—THEY ARE WORSTED AT DIJON, AND ENTER INTO A TREATY WITH THE FRENCH GENERAL—THE TREATY IS DISAVOWED BY LOUIS—DISMAL PROSPECTS OF FRANCE—HENRY VIII. ENTERS TOURNAY, AND RETURNS TO ENGLAND—A TWELVE-MONTHS' TRUCE SIGNED BY THE EUROPEAN SOVEREIGNS—DEATH OF ANNE DE BRETAGNE—GRIEF OF THE KING—MARRIAGE OF THE PRINCESS CLAUDE AND FRANCIS—THE COURT MOURNING—LOUIS URGED TO TAKE A THIRD WIFE—THE DUKE DE LONGUEVILLE NEGOTIATES FOR THE HAND OF THE PRINCESS MARY OF ENGLAND—MISUNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE TWO MONARCHS—THE TREATY IS RENEWED—BETROTHAL OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES—MARY AND BRANDON, DUKE OF SUFFOLK—ARRIVAL OF THE YOUNG QUEEN IN FRANCE—ANNE BOLEYN—THE ROYAL MARRIAGE—COURT FESTIVITIES—MARY BECOMES ENAMOURED OF FRANCIS—POSITION OF THE PRINCESS CLAUDE—A COURTIER'S CAUTION—ACCUSATION OF BRANTÔME—ILLNESS OF LOUIS XII.—HIS LAST INTERVIEW WITH FRANCIS—DEATH OF LOUIS XII.

CHAPTER V.

[1513-14.]

UNHAPPILY it was not alone against foreign animosity that Louis XII. had, at this period, to contend. Constant misunderstandings, which were even said to have influenced the late defeat, had taken place between the Duke de Longueville and M. de Piennes; and the king became so seriously alarmed for their consequences, upon finding that the troops were split into factions, each siding with their favourite commander, that he determined to confide to the young Duke de Valois the conduct of the forthcoming campaign; his prowess at Navara having given him confidence alike in his personal courage and his judgment, only insisting upon a continuance of the same system of defensive operations of which he had already ascertained the policy.

Francis eagerly embraced this new opportunity of distinguishing himself; and, notwithstanding his youth, carried out the wishes of his royal uncle with great forbearance. He marched the army back to Encre on the Somme, where he could effectually resist any attack, while he protected the frontier; and the enemy soon convinced him of the prudence of this first measure by capitulating with the defenders of Térouenne upon more

favourable terms than had previously been anticipated; after which Henry VIII, acting upon the selfish suggestion of Maximilian, who had on former occasions been frequently kept in check by that fortress, utterly demolished the fortifications for whose possession he had exhausted a large amount both of human life and treasure; and then proceeded to lay siege to Tournay.

The French monarch had, however, another enemy to contend against. The peace of Burgundy, which province the emperor had never ceased to reclaim as the inheritance of Marie de Bourgogne, his first wife, and the mother of his children, was threatened with a new invasion; and although the bulk of the population were decidedly favourable to the rule of Louis, the nobility, from old association, pecuniary interest, or national vanity, leant generally to their ancient independence, and the sway of their hereditary dukes; while, aware of this fact, the Swiss, whose dislike to the French monarch had never abated, and who were flushed, even to arrogance, by their recent success at Novara, resolved to carry the war into Burgundy. Some trifling insurrections had broken out in Switzerland, and the magistrates had affected to believe that they were instigated by French agents; although they might have been readily traced to the immense booty gained by the troops in the late struggle, whence resulted every description of licentiousness and disorder, naturally ending in insubordination and misrule. The Helvetic diet, whose tranquillity was disturbed by these outbreaks, was not slow in discovering an escape-valve for the heated and restless spirits who thus opposed its authority; and conse-

quently determined at once to release itself by organizing a distant expedition, and at the same time to recruit its treasury by the pillage of France. A force of eighteen thousand Swiss was accordingly collected in the different cantons, which were reviewed on the 9th of August at Zurich, and marched on the following day, under the command of Jacques de Watteville, an advocate of Berne, supported by a council formed of the chiefs of the several divisions. They traversed Franche-Comté as far as Gray, where they were met, on the 27th of the month, by the Duke Ulrich de Wirtemburg, who was awaiting their arrival at the head of the German and Comtois cavalry; and thence they proceeded to Dijon, which they reached on the 7th of September.

The city was ill calculated for resistance; and M. de la Tremouille had, with very indifferent success, endeavoured to put it into such a state of defence as might enable him at least to guard against any surprise. He therefore resolved to temporise; and, if possible, to conciliate an enemy against which he was totally unable, with his inadequate force, to contend. By a lucky chance, he made prisoners of several Swiss officers in a sally which he ventured beyond the walls, and he availed himself of this circumstance to impress upon them the policy of renewing the old attachment which had formerly subsisted between the two countries; expatiating on the value which his own monarch attached to their alliance, and his earnest wish to renew the good understanding which had been lately broken. As some among them evinced no reluctance while listening to these arguments, he concluded by lauding their late

bravery, distributing a few presents which were well received, and finally restoring them to liberty without exacting any species of ransom; a courtesy to which they were by no means insensible, and of which the good effect became soon apparent, by the arrival at Dijon of a safe-conduct, and an invitation for him to pay a visit to their chiefs. He at once accepted this overture; and was so successful during the interview, as to induce his late adversaries to conclude a negotiation which was not a mere capitulation for the beleaguered city, or a momentary truce, but a definitive treaty, involving not only the interests of France and Switzerland, but also those of all Europe. By this treaty it was arranged that he should pay over upon the instant the sum of 400,000 crowns (part of which was immediately raised among the officers of his little army, and deposited in the hands of the council); pledge himself to the liquidation of all arrears of pension due to the Swiss from France for former services performed—to the restitution of all cities, strongholds, or territory held by Louis XII. which were appurtenances to the Holy See—to the speedy evacuation of the castles of Milan, Cremona, and Asti; and also guarantee that the French king should renounce all future pretensions, both for himself and his successors, to the duchy of Milan, and the lordships of Cremona and Asti; and that none of the individuals who had joined the Swiss in their expedition to Burgundy should suffer any damage in such properties as they might possess within the kingdom of France.

On these conditions peace and amity was to be sworn between Louis XII, the Swiss League, Franche-Comte,

the Duke de Wirtemburg, and the Sire de Vergy. The pope was to be at liberty to accede to this treaty, should he see fit to do so, as were also the emperor and the holy Roman empire; and finally, M. de la Tremouille pledged himself that the confederates should, on their return to their own country, receive the sum of 400,000 crowns, payable at Zurich, one moiety within a fortnight after their arrival, and the remainder at the ensuing festival of Saint Martin. As the whole amount of forfeit-money claimed could not be collected upon the spot, they consented to receive 20,000 crowns on account; but as surety for the remainder, they carried away with them, in the character of hostages, the Baron de Mézières, the nephew of M. de la Tremouille; Rochefort, the Sénéchal of Dijon, and four citizens. The former having been, however, forewarned by his relative that the treaty would not, in all probability, be ratified, took the first opportunity of effecting his escape.

Louis XII. either felt or affected the greatest indignation at the concessions made by his general, and refused to fulfil conditions which he declared to be degrading and unfavourable to himself. He even addressed an autograph letter to M. de la Tremouille; in which he asserted that he considered such a treaty as that to which he had given his assent to be *marvellously strange;* a truth which was admitted in the reply; "But, by my faith, Sire;" added the straightforward soldier; "I was constrained to give it, by the wretched provision which had been made for the preservation of your kingdom."

The displeasure of the king was of short duration; and although he still adhered to his resolution of resist-

ing the conditions of the treaty, he nevertheless endeavoured to conciliate the Swiss; and empowered M. de la Tremouille to raise a loan of 50,000 crowns in Burgundy, to satisfy the most importunate of their demands; he even condescended to dissimulate, and sought to gain time, but he could not deceive the Swiss, who, already prejudiced against him, felt that they were overreached; and vowed a vengeance which they fearfully executed during the succeeding reign.

Fortune had declared itself adverse to Louis; nor were his allies exempted from their own share of disaster. The Venetians were signally defeated by the Spaniards; and the unhappy James IV. of Scotland lost his life at Flodden Field. The French king had however no time to indulge regret for the reverses of others. On the 15th of September, Maximilian and Henry had, as we have already stated, sat down before Tournay, which, situated within the boundary of the Low Countries, had enjoyed a government almost republican under the protection of France, and considered as one of its most precious privileges, its exemption from the necessity of admitting a garrison within its walls. Consequently, when at the commencement of the campaign Louis had offered to send them troops for their defence, they arrogantly replied, that "Tournay had never yet turned, and would not turn now;" a vaunt which left them in the power of their enemies, who treated with contempt the undisciplined citizens by whom they were opposed; and in the course of a few hours, stormed their walls, and compelled them to a capitulation, wherein, however, Henry VIII. guaranteed to them the continuance of their privileges.

After having made his entrance into the city with a puerile ostentation totally disproportioned to the circumstances, and which tended to excite the ridicule of all by whom it was witnessed, Henry, satisfied with the result of a campaign which, had it been efficiently conducted, must have tended to enhance both his own honour and the interests of his kingdom, returned at once to England, and thus relieved the French king from an enemy who might at any moment have become formidable.

On the 13th of March, 1514, a treaty was signed at Orleans by the several sovereigns who had been engaged in the wars of Italy, by which a truce of twelve months was determined on; while the Swiss, who were not included in the negotiation, laid down their arms in accordance with that of Dijon. Louis XII. had acceded to all the demands of the pope, and no longer possessed any portion of the papal states; a circumstance which afforded great relief to the mind of Anne de Bretagne: but which was nevertheless so far from conducing, as she had anticipated, to the restoration of her shattered health, that, although she eagerly watched the progress of events which were rapidly working out this result, she was not destined to witness it; for, at the close of the previous campaign, when her royal husband, after having distributed his forces in the fortified places of Picardy, returned to Blois for the winter, he found her sinking under the disease to which she had long been a victim, and which finally terminated her life on the 9th of January.

The grief of the king was unbounded when he became convinced that she had really ceased to exist; and when, on the following Friday, her body had been conveyed

with great magnificence to St. Denis, and there pompously interred, he immediately retired to the Bois de Vincennes, where, during eight days, he shut himself into his private apartments, forbidding all access to his person, in order that he might give free course to his grief. He not only assumed a sable habit himself, in conformity with the taste of his lost wife, but he compelled his whole court to do the same; nor would he, when he again appeared in public, receive any foreign ambassador who was not similarly attired. Nevertheless, he did not fail in the pledge which he had given to the States-General at Tours; and on the 10th of May the Princess Claude was publicly married, at St. Germain-en-Laye, to her cousin Francis, Duke de Valois. But, even upon this occasion, the king would not permit that the mourning garments of his court should be laid aside; and accordingly an old chronicler quoted by Brantôme, declares that "when he gave his daughter to M. d'Angoulême, afterwards the king Francis, the mourning was not remitted by his court; and, on the day of the espousals in the chapel of St. Germain-en-Laye, the bridegroom and the bride were simply attired in black cloth, handsomely, and in funereal fashion, for the death of the before-mentioned queen, Madame Anne de Bretagne, in the presence of the king her father, accompanied by all the princes of the blood, and noble lords, and prelates, and princesses, and ladies, each dressed in a mourning robe of black."

How evil an omen was this for the gentle-hearted princess Claude!

The marriage was no sooner accomplished than Louis XII. invested his son-in-law with the administration of

the duchy of Brittany; somewhat, as the Breton historians declare, contrary to his wishes; but although Madame Claude de France, who was its heiress, had espoused the presumptive heir to the crown, the contract by which they were united contained no clause which assured to her husband the actual possession of the coveted duchy; while this circumstance was rendered still more unpalatable to the young prince by the fact, that about the same period, Louis was himself induced by his counsellors to entertain the project of a third marriage, than which no step could have been more inimical to the prospects of Francis; while the selection, ultimately made by the king and his advisers, was probably as little calculated to ensure his own happiness, had the union been fated to be of long duration.

Still newly widowed, and deeply attached to the memory of Anne de Bretagne, for whose sake he had repudiated his first wife, state policy on the one hand, and on the other his anxiety to become the father of a son to whom he might bequeath his crown, induced the French king to lend a willing ear to the suggestions of those about him; and although in his fifty-third year, when his constitution had become seriously undermined by severe and constant attacks of gout, to give a new queen to France. The Austrian party formed by Anne de Bretagne, fearing the future influence of Louise de Savoie when her son should attain the throne, having been unable to prevent the marriage of Francis with the Princess Claude, assailed the king with perpetual expostulations; and proposed to him, in the first place, the hand of Marguerite of Austria, governante of the Low

Countries; but although this princess, owing to her betrothal to the dauphin, had been educated at the court of France, and had, at that period, interested the affections of Louis, then duke d'Orleans, she had now attained her thirty-fourth year, and was the childless widow of two husbands; a sterility which he declared to be an insuperable objection to their alliance. Ferdinand of Spain then offered to him Eleanora of Austria,[1] the niece of Marguerite, and sister of the archduke Charles, at that time in the very bloom of youth. To this union Louis advanced no objection, and the rather as it was to form the pledge of a reconciliation between himself, Maximilian, and Ferdinand; nor did the three monarchs lose any time in deciding on the outline of a treaty to be executed at the expense of their ancient allies the English, the Venetians, and the Swiss.

This project was, however, rendered abortive by the suspicions of Henry VIII, which suggested some occult and important reason for the delay of Maximilian in concluding the nuptials of the archduke Charles with the Princess Mary of England, his own sister. Nor was it long ere they were confirmed through the agency of the Duke de Longueville, who had been taken prisoner at the "Battle of the Spurs," and whom the pleasure-loving

[1] Eleanora of Austria was the daughter of Philip I. of Spain, and the sister of the Emperor Charles V. Born at Louvain in 1498, she married, in 1519, Emmanuel, king of Portugal; and, after his death, which occurred in 1530, she became Queen of France by her second marriage with Francis I. This union was extremely unhappy, owing to the passion of the monarch for the beautiful Duchesse d'Etampes. When once more left a widow in 1547, she withdrew to Spain, and died in 1558, without issue.

king had admitted to his intimacy, and favoured so greatly, that he was in the habit of playing tennis with him, and permitting him to win until he had gained the sum appointed for his ransom, which amounted to 50,000 crowns.

The resentment of the English monarch upon finding himself duped both by Maximilian and Ferdinand, encouraged the duke during their frequent conversations to introduce upon every favourable occasion some well-timed allusion to the injury sustained by both France and England from the continuation of a war which exhausted the resources of both without benefit to either; and to propose a peace which he was aware would be highly welcome to his own sovereign. As Henry listened without any manifestation of displeasure to these frequent hints, De Longueville became in time still more explicit; and at length insinuated that the death of Anne de Bretagne had opened up a medium of union between the two nations which might tend to their mutual advantage; declaring, at the same time, that although the marriage of a princess of sixteen with a sovereign of fifty-three might appear in some respects unsuitable, yet that this inequality in years would find its compensation in many circumstances too obvious to be overlooked, and of which he would consequently adduce but one; namely, that Henry would, by acceding to an alliance between his sister and the French king, withdraw himself from the perfidious Ferdinand, upon whose faith he could no longer rely, and connect himself and his interests for life with those of a prince whose probity and honour were above suspicion.

The English monarch listened, and was convinced. Broken faith and a harassing war on the one side, and a firm ally and a speedy peace on the other, left little opportunity for hesitation; and, accordingly, about two months subsequent to the death of Anne de Bretagne, Louis XII, who readily welcomed the prospect of an union which would convert a formidable enemy into a fast friend, deputed De Longueville, whose ransom had been paid in English crowns, and whose liberty had been thus easily acquired, to ask for him the hand of the young and beautiful princess Mary, the affianced but unclaimed bride of Charles of Austria.

The articles were concluded, after some difficulties, originating in the desire of Louis to hasten the decision of his brother-monarch by a hostile demonstration, on the pretext that Henry had not yet ratified the treaty of Orleans; which he effected by marching eight thousand men and a brigade of artillery against the castle of Guines, near Calais; a want of tact of which he was immediately made conscious by the indignant retort of the English sovereign, who at once resented the practical threat by declaring that he had an army of twenty thousand men ready to cross the channel in defence of his stronghold, should need be.

This mutual defiance necessarily caused a temporary suspension of the negotiations of marriage; but the Duke de Longueville, unwilling to see all his exertions rendered nugatory, addressed himself at this delicate juncture to Wolsey, then Bishop of Lincoln; and, authorized by his royal master, made such proposals to the English minister as induced him to espouse his cause. The anger of

Henry gave way before the flattering overtures of the French plenipotentiary; and it was ultimately agreed that the marriage should take place, upon condition that Tournay should remain in the hands of the English; that Richard de la Pole,[1] then an exile in France, and who affected to revive the pretensions of the house of York, should be banished to Metz, and remain a pensioner of the French king; that Henry should receive the payment of a million of crowns, being the arrears due by treaty to his father and himself; and that the royal bride should be portioned with four hundred thousand crowns, and enjoy as large a jointure as any previous queen of France, not even excepting her immediate predecessor, Anne de Bretagne, although the latter had been heiress of Brittany.

Not only were the respective ages of the contracting parties wholly disproportioned, but the previous education of Mary had rendered her in every respect ill-suited to perform the duties which she was thus called upon so suddenly to fulfil. Her heart had, moreover, already been bestowed elsewhere; while, as she afterwards proved, her affections were by no means so stable as to hold out any rational hope that she would attach herself in earnest and good faith to her mature husband; although she had been so well tutored in courtly dissimulation as effectually to conceal her real feelings. Having lost her mother when she was only five years of age, she had been allowed a greater licence of thought and action than was compatible with her sex and rank; and although scarcely sixteen at the period of her marriage, she had

[1] Richard de la Pole was the fourth son of Elizabeth, sister of Edward IV.

already encouraged the attentions of Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, the foster-brother and favourite of Henry VIII, whose comparatively obscure birth had been concealed, even if not forgotten, under the splendour of his new title. The partiality of the king, and his own universal popularity, rendered the new-made duke bold; while the evident admiration of Mary, upon whom his great personal beauty and manly bearing had not failed to produce their effect, combined with the constant opportunities which were afforded to him of prosecuting his ambitious suit, would probably have insured its ultimate success, had not the overtures of Louis at once opened the eyes of the English monarch to the impolicy of such a concession.

Thus far, Mary was beyond all doubt more to be commiserated than condemned; and, had she more perfectly fulfilled her mission as a wife and a queen, every heart must have sympathised in the cruel constraint to which she had been subjected; but she was vain, reckless, and careless of that dignity which would have compelled respect, and taught those who approached her to overlook the young and blooming woman in the self-governed and virtuous sovereign.

Before the ratification of the marriage treaty, the princess declared in the presence of a notary and witnesses, that she had pledged her faith by compulsion to the Archduke Charles, who was to have married her by proxy on attaining his fourteenth year, which he had failed to do; and she further asserted that she had received assurances to the effect that his counsellors and confidential friends had exerted all their influence to

infuse into his mind a spirit of resentment against, and dislike to, her royal brother.

The treaty was then completed, and the months of August and September were spent in making the necessary preparations for the voyage of the young queen; one of the conditions agreed upon having been that Henry should defray all the outlay of her journey to Abbeville; and that one moiety of her dower should be expended in jewels.

On the 13th of August the marriage took place by proxy at Greenwich, the Duke de Longueville representing his royal master; after which the princess crossed to Boulogne, attended by a splendid retinue, where she was received upon her landing by the Duke de Vendôme, who a day or two subsequently conducted her to Abbeville. The king, whose impatience had been excited by the florid descriptions which he had heard of her beauty, and who was anxious to ascertain their truth, had already arrived in that city; but, unable to control his desire to see her at the earliest moment, he mounted his horse and proceeded to a village upon the road, where they were privately introduced, and he remained for a few moments in conversation with his bride and the triumphant ambassador. Fascinated and elated, he then returned to Abbeville as unostentatiously as he had left it; while the princess continued her stately progress to the city gates, where she was welcomed according to the prescribed ceremonial by the Duke de Valois, and greeted by a succession of the most costly and magnificent pageants that human ingenuity and knightly courtesy could invent.

We have already alluded to the brilliancy of the young queen's retinue, which was worthy the sister of one sovereign and the bride of another; but perhaps the most interesting circumstance connected with it exists in the fact that the fair and unfortunate Anna Boleyn, then in her first girlhood, was one of her four maids of honour, and of the thirty-six female attendants by whom she was accompanied.

Even at that early age, however, it would appear, from the testimony of a contemporaneous historian, that the court beauty had already imbibed that thirst for admiration, and that baneful ambition which were fated to be her downfall; for even when by her grace and beauty, and above all by the seductive attraction of her manner, and the vivacity of her intellect, she had captivated the mind of the Princess Claude to such an extent that she caused her to be attached to her own household, she soon wearied of the wholesome restraints to which she was there subjected, and passed into the suite of the Duchess d'Alençon; where she became the idol of the courtiers by whom she was surrounded, and whose attentions she encouraged until she felt that they were likely to interfere with her more serious projects.

The impression produced upon the feelings of Louis XII. by the extraordinary loveliness of his new consort, has been duly recorded by all contemporary historians; but the emotions of the young and blooming princess, thus abruptly compelled to receive to her heart and arms the mature and already infirm monarch, have no where been registered. Suffice it, that the marriage was once more celebrated at Abbeville on the

11th of October; and that an alliance, which had originally been dictated by state policy, was at once cemented by the charms of the girl-queen; while it was rendered as welcome to the nation as to its monarch by the fact that it put a termination to a disastrous war with England, and to some difficult negotiations with Austria.

The ceremony was not performed in the cathedral, but in a vast saloon of the palace, which was hung throughout with cloth of gold, and so spacious that all present could command a view of the contracting parties. The king and queen were seated side by side under a canopy at the upper end of the apartment; and the royal bride, with her hair totally unconfined, and scattered over her shoulders, wore a small hat above the luxuriant tresses which were unanimously declared to be unrivalled throughout Christendom, in lieu of the crown which could be assumed only when her coronation took place at St. Denis. The Duke d'Angoulême officiated as bridesman, and the Princess Claude was the principal attendant of the bride, although her fair brow was clouded as she remembered the recent death of her mother. A splendid banquet, followed by a ball, concluded the ceremony; after which the court proceeded to St. Denis, where, on the 5th of November, the ceremonial of Mary's coronation took place with great pomp in the cathedral; and on the succeeding day she made her entry into Paris as Queen of France, accompanied not only by all that was great and noble in the country, but also by her English suite, and a number of foreigners of distinction; all of whom were entertained during the

marriage festivities at the expense of the king. These tourneys and banquets were continued for the space of six weeks; after which the English retinue of the young queen returned home, laden with valuable presents, leaving the Duke of Suffolk as ambassador at the French court; a short-sighted piece of policy, of which Henry VIII. in after-life would assuredly never have been guilty.

The advent of the new sovereign at once changed the mourning of the court into festivity and splendour: nor was it long ere the fancy, if not the heart, of Mary became thralled by the handsome person and chivalric accomplishments of the young Duke de Valois; while not even the recollection that he was the husband of her step-daughter sufficed to compel her to that self-control which might have concealed her weakness. Suffolk himself was forgotten in this new passion; and by her own levity and want of caution it ere long became a subject of comment to the whole court. In the tilts and joustings which daily succeeded each other for her entertainment, Francis was, unhappily, always the most prominent figure; thus affording a dangerous contrast to her royal husband, who, despite the efforts which he made to assimilate himself in prowess with the young and gallant cavaliers about him, soon evinced unequivocal symptoms of his inability to persevere in such a career of dissipation and fatigue.

The natural result supervened; Louis in a short time fell into a state of languor and exhaustion, which betrayed that over-taxed nature was revenging herself for these untimely excesses; and the hopes of

Francis once more became buoyant. Meanwhile, however, he succeeded in establishing a closer intimacy between his young step-mother and his gentle wife, by which he was enabled to enjoy the society of the former without any apparent effort, and at the same time to secure himself against any new rival in her affections.

To the Princess Claude such a friend was doubly welcome, from the fact that she already suffered severely under the rigorous rule of Louise de Savoie, who, profiting by her timid and yielding nature, revenged upon the daughter her old hatred of the dead parent; and condemned her to a life of almost perfect seclusion, in which she was wholly dependent for amusement upon the nun-like court which had been formed for her, her breviary, and her spinning-wheel. Little did the pure-hearted and neglected wife of the brilliant Francis apprehend, when she received with sisterly affection the beautiful young queen, that she was daily undermining her in the affections of a husband whom she idolized. But this, according to Brantôme, did not fail to come to pass. Mary was, on her side, as much dazzled by the showy qualities of Francis, as he was enthralled by her surpassing beauty; nor was it long ere she listened without displeasure to an avowal of his passion, rendered doubly culpable as it was from their relative position. The same author even ascribes to the young queen the still more odious desire of securing an heir to the throne, of which she already despaired in her marriage, through the medium of her step-daughter's husband; but his evidence is scarcely to be received in so extreme

a case, based as it is upon the single fact that M. de Grignaud, a noble of Perigord, who had been *chevalier d'honneur* to Anne de Bretagne, and then held the same office under Mary, considered it necessary to warn the Duke de Valois against the possible consequences of so undue an intimacy; and upon finding his remonstrances disregarded, subsequently informed Louise de Savoie of the peril to her son's interests which must supervene, in order that she might keep a strict watch over the progress of their attachment.

That Mary should ever have contemplated so heinous a crime is, however, more than improbable. Guilt is ever prone to assume a veil of caution, and to garb itself in the robe of prudery and dissimulation, while there was nothing bordering upon these in her common deportment. On the contrary, she constantly addressed the duke as "my son-in-law;" and admitted him publicly to all the privileges of so near a connexion; openly evincing the preference which she felt for his society, and exceeding on many occasions the limits which a more delicately constituted mind would have conceded even to the claim of so intimate a relationship. That she not only admired Francis, but also loved him, is her reproach; and that reproach should surely suffice, (for it was a heavy one!) without attributing to a mere girl, who had only attained her sixteenth year, an excess of moral turpitude which the heart withers even to contemplate.

The subsequent attempt imputed to her by the same authority, to impose a surreptitious heir upon the nation, is deserving of quite as little credit; for Mary, who had

already given proof of her aptitude in conforming herself to circumstances in the almost affectionate letters which she had addressed to Louis XII. before their marriage, and who, on the demise of the king, saw herself closely surrounded by the very individuals who were the most vitally concerned in unmasking such a deception, was not likely to degrade alike herself and her high station by so base and shallow an artifice; while her almost immediate union with the Duke of Suffolk, however much it tended to confirm the previous opinion of her levity, is nevertheless also the best refutation of the coarse and unmanly slander. That she was eminently imprudent during the brief period of her royalty, is unfortunately undeniable; but from imprudence there is, happily, a long step to flagrant culpability. In any case, she was not long destined to retain the dignity of Queen of France; for she had been but eighty-two days a wife ere she became a widow. The first symptoms of the languor which proved fatal to Louis XII. manifested themselves, as we have already stated, before the festivities consequent upon his marriage had yet terminated. An alarming attack of gout supervened; and he became so much enfeebled by its violence, that he was at length compelled to attend the jousts and tourneys upon a litter; while so rapidly did the disease progress, that ere long he was unable to leave his bed. Nevertheless, his physicians, unwilling to believe that he was really sinking, continued to declare that he would rally; but Louis himself repudiated the idea. He too surely felt that the grasp of death was upon him, and met his fate with a calmness worthy of a great monarch and an honest man.

When he became conscious that his end was near, he summoned the young Duke de Valois to his bed-side; and having, with considerable difficulty, raised himself to a sitting posture, flung his arms about his neck, and embracing him with affectionate emotion, said feebly, but firmly; "Francis, I am dying! I consign our subjects to your care." The prince burst into tears, and implored him to dismiss such gloomy thoughts, as his physicians augured more favourably. The dying king, however, only shook his head; he was aware that earthly help could avail him no longer; and as his weeping successor established himself beside his pillow, he exerted his last remaining powers to impress upon him the awful extent of the responsibility with which he would, in a few hours, be invested. Acute suffering at length terminated his efforts; and he expired in the arms of his royal nephew, with a smile of gratified affection upon his lips.

Thus, while yet deeply enamoured of his fair young wife, surrounded by worldly grandeur and festivity, and meditating, in his graver moments, future expeditions against Italy, Louis XII, whose hurried journey to receive his bride, and whose exertions during the subsequent rejoicings to assume the semblance of a youth and vigour which he no longer possessed, had overtaxed his physical powers, fell a victim to his imprudence about midnight of the 1st of January, 1515.

CHAPTER VI.

[1515.]

THE QUEEN CEDES HER ESTATES TO HER HUSBAND—THE BRETONS DISALLOW HER RIGHT—ENTHUSIASM OF THE FRENCH PEOPLE ON THE ACCESSION OF FRANCIS—HIS CORONATION—HIS INTERVIEW WITH QUEEN MARY—HIS CAUTION TO SUFFOLK—BRANDON MARRIES THE WIDOWED QUEEN—IS REPROACHED BY FRANCIS FOR HIS PERFIDY—BUT RECONCILED TO HENRY AT THE ENTREATY OF HIS WIFE, AND RETURNS TO ENGLAND—FRANCIS MAKES HIS PUBLIC ENTRY INTO PARIS—HIS PROFUSION—HIS ROMANTIC TASTES—HIS HIGH SPIRIT—HE FORMS HIS GOVERNMENT—CHARLES DE BOURBON CREATED CONSTABLE OF FRANCE—MARRIAGE OF MADEMOISELLE DE BOURBON WITH THE DUKE DE LORRAINE—THE KING AND THE WILD BOAR—THE COURT OF MADAME D'ANGOULÊME—HER MAIDS OF HONOUR—CIRCLE OF THE QUEEN—HER LOVE OF RETIREMENT—FRANCIS RESOLVES TO RECOVER THE MILANESE—THE ARCHDUKE CHARLES SENDS AMBASSADORS TO FRANCE—IS PROMISED THE HAND OF THE PRINCESS RÉNÉE, THE QUEEN'S SISTER—HENRI DE NASSAU—HE MARRIES CLAUDINE DE CHALON—STATE OF EUROPE—TREATY BETWEEN FRANCE AND ENGLAND—FRANCIS ENDEAVOURS TO CONCILIATE THE SWISS—THEY THREATEN TO INVADE FRANCE—FRANCIS MARCHES A STRONG FORCE TOWARDS BURGUNDY—FERDINAND ENDEAVOURS TO ALARM THE POPE AND THE EMPEROR—FRANCIS REMOVES TO AMBOISE, AND SENDS AN EMBASSY TO ROME.

CHAPTER VI.

[1515.]

FRANCIS I. was no sooner proclaimed king, than queen Claude, in consideration of the pledge which he had given to provide the dowry of the Princess Rénée, her sister, formally ceded to him the duchy of Brittany, and the counties of Nantes, Blois, Etampes, and Montfort, to be enjoyed and governed during his life, as veritable Duke of Brittany.

This first cession took place on the 22d of April; but on the 28th of June following, as it did not by any means secure to her royal husband the whole extent of the desired benefit, the queen was induced to execute a new deed, by which she conferred these privileges upon him for ever, in failure of her own children, should they die before him. This wife-like divestiture was, however, only partially valid; as the marriage-contract of Anne de Bretagne had distinctly endowed her second son with the possession and sovereignty of the duchy; while, as there had been a failure of male issue, and the clause had never been revised, the Bretons, who were anxious to throw off the yoke of French supremacy, and who contended that the crowns of Brittany and France could not legally be united upon the same head, unless

it were that of an only son, would not admit the claim of Claude; but declared the right of succession to be in favour of her younger sister; this alienation and disposal having been, moreover, stipulated when negotiations were pending for a marriage between Madame Claude and the Count de Luxembourg. In this opinion they were supported by another clause, which bestowed the duchy upon the second child, were it male or female; and in virtue of the said contract, the Bretons declared that the Princess Rénée was the legitimate heiress.

Consequently, the donation made by the queen of Francis I. met with no ratification from the Bretons themselves; and the rather that there still existed certain families in the duchy, who possessed collateral claims to the succession; but who, seeing the king already the father of a young family, every individual of which must inherit before them, remained passive, and awaited future events.

The acclamations of the army, the lays of the most distinguished national poets, the tumultuous shouting of the vassals, and the congratulations of all the feudatory nobles, were the welcome of Francis as he ascended the throne of France. His first act of royalty was to proclaim a suspension of arms; and once more the country for a brief space breathed freely. On the 25th of January, he was crowned with great pomp at the cathedral of Rheims, by Robert de Lenoncourt, Archbishop of Paris; and never had either of those two great cities made so profuse a display of magnificence as upon that occasion; while previously, as if to refute the most heinous slander of Brantôme on Queen Mary, a contem-

porary writer asserts that Francis waited upon her daily to condole with her upon her bereavement, accompanied by Madame Claude his wife, during the lapse of six weeks — the period assigned for the royal widows of France to remain in their beds, seeing no light save that of the wax tapers by which their apartments were illuminated—and that he then and there formally demanded to know whether he might consider himself as the legitimate sovereign of France, a question which she alone was competent to answer; when the young widow at once and unhesitatingly replied that such he was; that she knew of no king save himself; and that she was unaware of any cause in herself which could destroy his right to the succession.

Moreover, Francis had long been cognisant of the attachment which had formerly existed between Mary and Suffolk, and formally warned the latter against any proceeding which might excite the displeasure of the English monarch.

"I am aware, duke;" he said gravely; "of your whole history, of your affection for the queen of Louis XII, of the influence which you possess in England, and of much more than you can be prepared to suppose. I am anxious that nothing should occur to dishonour me, nor to cause umbrage to my brother, the King of England, towards whom I desire to exhibit the same friendship and cordiality which were felt by the late king, my father-in-law; I, therefore, entreat of you not to take any steps which may involve our good understanding; and should a promise have been exchanged between yourself and the queen, to be careful of my dignity, by taking

immediate measures to secure the approval of the king your master; and by inducing him to inform me in writing of his good pleasure, at which I shall rejoice should it be favourable to your wishes. But, if it prove otherwise, I warn you on your life to beware of what you do; for, should you disobey me, I will make you bitterly repent your imprudence."

This caution the duke received without evincing the slightest resentment, declaring on oath that he would attempt nothing derogatory to his own honour, or to the will of the king his master; a pledge which he, however, falsified almost on the instant, urged, as some historians declare, by the representations and entreaties of Mary herself; for only four or five days subsequently to this interview, a secret marriage took place, and the dowager-queen of France became Duchess of Suffolk.

Francis, indignant at this want of faith, summoned the duke to his presence, and reproached him vehemently for his perfidy; he even concluded his remarks by saying; "If I were strictly to perform my duty, I should, this very hour, strike your head from your shoulders, for you have violated your oath."

The duke, terrified by the menace, hastened to justify himself: "I beseech of you, Sire;" he exclaimed; "to pardon me. I confess that I have erred; but I entreat your majesty to remember the strength of the affection by which I have been misled, and to extend your mercy in so extreme a case."

"Sir;" was the stern reply; "you require more than I am disposed to grant; for you appear on your part to have forgotten that the lady whom you have induced to

become your wife, was not only a princess of England, but also the dowager-queen of France. Let the king your master only require it of me, and I shall at once know how to avenge alike his dignity and my own."

But however the young king might have felt it incumbent upon him to exhibit this display of indignation, it is not the less certain that the clandestine marriage of Mary with one of her brother's subjects, was by no means unwelcome to him, as it precluded the possibility of her hand being hereafter bestowed upon some prince who might be at enmity with France, and induce the English monarch to espouse his interests; a consideration which decided him, in accordance with the request of the queen-duchess, to intercede with Henry VIII, and to procure the pardon of the culprits. In this undertaking he easily succeeded, the influence of the favourite being still great over the mind of his royal master; and he then lost no time before,—governed by the same policy, and, moreover, instigated beyond all doubt by the human weakness which, whatever might be his own line of conduct, led him to conceal the mortification that a nature so vain as his could not fail to experience, on perceiving the facility with which Mary had cast off the yoke of his fascinations, and restored her wavering affection to its first object,—Francis hastened to repay to the princess the dowry which she had brought to Louis XII, and to expedite her return to England with her new bridegroom.

The solemn entry of the young king into his good city of Paris was hailed with delight. His commanding person, splendid horsemanship, and urbane deportment

won all hearts, and made his progress one unbroken triumph. All the princes and noble ladies of the kingdom, as well as many foreigners of rank, were in his train. Jousts and tourneys occupied the succeeding days, at the whole of which the high-born dames and damsels of the court were present; as well as at the balls and banquets, which filled the streets with equipages and torch-light throughout the entire nights. Above twelve hundred princes, dukes, counts, and cavaliers assisted at these memorable festivities, which were rendered still more brilliant by the presence of the queen, the Countess d'Angoulême, Madame de Bourbon, and all the ladies of their respective suites. Nor did even this magnificence suffice to satisfy the superb tastes of Francis; for he no sooner felt the crown firmly fixed upon his brow, than he became anxious to exhibit his splendour to the whole of his people; and accordingly, as if to form as startling a contrast as possible with the staid and sober state of his predecessor, the court galas were divested of their exclusiveness, and not only the whole of the nobility, but even the *bourgeoisie* were admitted; a popular measure, which for a time blinded all ranks to the enormous outlay that they involved; and it was not, consequently, until it was found necessary to increase the national taxes in order to supply the exhausted treasury, that the more prudent of the citizens began to question the expediency of thus impoverishing the revenues of the country for the the mere purposes of amusement.

The young king no sooner found himself at liberty to regulate his own studies, than he laid aside all books, save those chivalrous romances in which, from his

earliest boyhood, he had delighted, and upon which he sought to model his own character. Nor was it long ere he infected all the young nobles about his person with the same extravagant and romantic fancy. The Knights of the Round Table became the models of the French courtiers, and the palace of Charlemagne their ideal habitation; while the beauties of the court eagerly welcomed a state of society in which they were outwardly worshipped as goddesses, despite the concealed contempt which the frailties of too many among them might induce. Moreover, Louise de Savoie, who idolized her son, and was proud of his personal beauty and accomplishments, in order to retain her power over his mind, encouraged him in every caprice which could flatter his vanity, or consolidate her own influence; and she, consequently, offered rather furtherance than objection to a puerile ambition beneath the dignity of a great monarch, who soon learned to consider animal courage as the highest virtue to which a sovereign could attain; and to neglect the more important tactics of modern warfare, while he attached an undue value to mere personal prowess.

Nor was this vital mistake in the field compensated by prudence in the internal economy of the nation; for, already constitutionally enamoured of whatever was magnificent and striking, the favourite studies of Francis led him to suppose that all minor considerations should give way before the regal state by which it was his passion to surround himself; a fatal error, which was destined to be expiated by his subjects; while, in order the more thoroughly to embody the personage of his excitable imagination, he taught himself to believe that a monarch

who was also a true knight should neither give battle, nor retreat before a superior force. His leading ambition was to be at once a great king and a *preux chevalier;* courteous and liberal towards the other sex, and absolute with his own. To him the members of the national parliaments, the most powerful of his nobility, and the bulk of his people, were alike as regarded his sovereign will and rule; he admitted no opposition to his power, recognised no right of opinion save his own, and brooked neither dissent nor delay when once his pleasure was made known.

These were sufficiently dangerous elements in the nature of one called at so early an age to govern a great nation; but the redeeming quality of Francis was an elevation of character that led him to emulate both the physical and moral heroism of which he had made his idol; and thus, his very errors wore an aspect of kingly splendour, which dazzled even those who were capable of appreciating their danger; and which has subsequently served as their palliation with the majority of his historians. Moreover, the young monarch, reared in the midst of an admiring court, had imbibed no prejudices, and nourished no jealousies. The liberality of Louis XII, who had been too high-minded to treat him with distrust because he was destined to succeed to the crown, had effectually prevented the existence of all cabals and party-spirit; and thus his first act of royal power was not, as is so frequently the case on an accession, to displace, but to confirm, the ministers of the late king in their several offices; while he was equally regardful of his personal friends.

ASIATIC SOCIETY

J W Cook sc

CHARLES,

DUKE OF BOURBON & CONSTABLE

OF FRANCE.

Killed at the siege of Rome 6 May 1527

FROM A SCARCE PRINT AFTER TITIAN, ENGRAVED BY VORSTERMAN

Upon his mother Francis bestowed the title of duchess, with an increased revenue, and the palace of Amboise as a residence. His sister Marguerite was invested with the dignity of *Madame*, and was thenceforward called both Madame de France, and Madame de Valois; while two years subsequently she was created Duchess de Berri. The vacant office of Constable of France was, at her earnest request, bestowed upon Charles de Montpensier, who had, by his marriage with his cousin Suzanne, daughter and heiress of the Sire de Beaujeu and Madame Anne de France, become Duke de Bourbon; a marriage in which, notwithstanding the amiable qualities possessed by both parties, no happiness could be anticipated, from the fact that bride and bridegroom had alike already bestowed their affections elsewhere; and to which a desire to escape from certain disagreeable discussions which might have arisen from sundry clauses in the will of a common ancestor of the two contracting parties, had alone induced Charles to consent.

In conferring the dignity of constable upon the duke, Francis I. had made a great concession to his affection for Marguerite; for he had never forgotten the quarrel which had taken place between them ten years previously at the castle of Amboise; and the favour was enhanced by the fact, that, since the treason of Saint-Pol,[1] in the

[1] Louis de Luxembourg, Count de Saint-Pol, was born about 1430. He at first took up arms for the English, but subsequently made his submission to Charles VII. of France. He became the constant companion of the dauphin, and assisted at the taking of the Norman towns from the English in 1449. He commanded the vanguard at the battle of Montlhéry; and Louis XI, in order to detach

reign of Louis XI, this, the highest official dignity in the kingdom, had only been granted long subsequently to the death of that noble, by Anne de France, then Dame de Beaujeu, to the Duke Jean de Bourbon, her husband's elder brother; while, since that period, the post had remained vacant, and was supposed to be virtually annulled, although not formally abolished; neither Charles VIII. nor Louis XII. having appointed a successor to Jean de Bourbon. The Count de Vendôme became Governor of the Isle of France; M. de Lautrec[1] was invested with the government of Guienne; Bonnivet was created Admiral of the Fleet; the Sire de

him from the Duke of Burgundy, to whose interests he leaned, made him Constable of France. Saint-Pol took the cities of Saint-Quentin and Amiens from Charles the Bold; but, impelled by the spirit of intrigue with which he was possessed, he endeavoured to create discord between the two princes; who, ultimately perceiving that he was betraying them both, agreed to render him the victim of his own duplicity. An opportunity of doing this soon presented itself, by his proposing to open the gates of the fortresses on the Somme to Edward of England, while at the same time he renewed his offers of service to Louis. Seized as a traitor, he was committed to the Bastille, and finally beheaded in the Place de Grève in 1475.

[1] Odet de Foix, Sire de Lautrec, Marshal of France, accompanied Louis XII. in his expedition in Italy, and entered Genoa with him in 1507. The cousin and comrade-in-arms of Gaston de Foix, who was killed at the battle of Ravenna, in 1512, he defended him courageously until he himself fell covered with wounds, none of which, however, proved mortal. In 1521, Lautrec was appointed Lieutenant-General of Francis I. in Italy. Compelled by his troops to engage the enemy, he was vanquished at Bicocca; and returned to Paris, after having lost the Milanese. He returned to Italy in 1525, and retook Genoa, Alexandria, and Pavia; and in 1528 fell a victim to a fever engendered by the excessive heat to which he had been exposed during the campaign.

la Palice made Marshal of France; M. de Boissy, who had completed the education of the young king, received the appointment of Grand Master, vacated by the promotion of M. de la Palice, as well as the superintendence of affairs; and Anthony Duprat,[1] the *protégé* of Madame d'Angoulême, was, at her earnest request, created Chancellor of the Kingdom.

This was the most unfortunate of all the appointments made by Francis; as to the machinations of this unworthy minister, many of the subsequent calamities of his reign have been universally attributed. Rendered far-sighted by his ambition, Duprat had, pending the misunderstanding which existed between Anne de Bretagne and Louise de Savoie, (at which period he was first president of the parliament of Paris,) attached himself to the party of the latter during her temporary exile from the court, assisted her with his advice and support, and finally secured her unbounded gratitude.

As an equivalent for this unhappy selection of a chancellor, Francis, however, distinguished by his most marked affection and favour, Anne, Seigneur de Montmorency,[2]

[1] Antoine Duprat was born at Issoire, in Auvergne, in 1463. It was by his advice that Francis I. abolished the pragmatic sanction, and offered judicial appointments for sale, as well as imposing rents upon the Hôtel de Ville. After the death of his wife, he embraced the ecclesiastical profession, and became, first Archbishop of Sens, and subsequently a cardinal. He died in 1535.

[2] Anne de Montmorency, one of the great captains of the sixteenth century, was born in 1493, at Chantilly. He served his first campaign in Italy, in 1512; and in 1521 defended the city of Mézières conjointly with Bayard. His prowess at La Bicocca was rewarded by a marshal's *bâton* (1522) when he was already Captain-General of the Swiss troops. Taken prisoner at Pavia, and after-

and Philippe Chabot, Sire de Brion;[1] two young nobles who subsequently made themselves famous by the services which they rendered to their country.

In the month of May, Francis, probably somewhat alarmed by the deficit which had already betrayed itself in the national exchequer, removed his court to Amboise, whither Madame d'Angoulême had preceded him, for the purpose of celebrating at that castle the marriage of Mademoiselle de Bourbon, the sister of the connétable, with the Duke de Lorraine; and it is upon record that, on this occasion, being desirous to give some variety to the festivities, which were limited in their nature by the fact that, in a private residence, the etiquette of mourning for the late king did not permit either balls or masquerades, the young monarch caused a wild boar, which had been taken alive in the neighbouring forest, to be turned

wards liberated, he obtained, in consideration of his eminent services, the rank of Grand Master, and the government of Languedoc. The campaign of 1536 gained for him the sword of Connétable in 1538; and from that period to his disgrace in 1541, he was the soul of the councils of Francis I. Recalled by Henry II. in 1547, he conquered the Bolognese in 1550; caused his barony of Montmorency to be elevated to a duchy-peerage in 1551; and lost the battle of Saint-Quentin, where he was taken prisoner in 1557. Once more exiled from the court in 1559, he was again recalled on the accession of Charles IX. in 1560; declared himself against the Calvinists, and gained the battle of Dreux in 1562, and that of St. Denis in 1567, where, however, he was mortally wounded, and expired two days afterwards.

[1] Philippe de Chabot, Sire de Brion, the descendant of an illustrious family of Poitou, was an Admiral of France, Governor of Burgundy and Normandy, and was taken prisoner at the battle of Pavia with Francis I. He commanded the Piedmontese army in 1535. Accused of malversation, he was disgraced, and condemned to a fine of 70,000 crowns. He died in 1543.

loose in the great court-yard of the castle, having previously ordered every issue by which the savage denizen of the woods might escape, to be carefully closed. This being, as it appeared, fully accomplished, the courtly company then assembled at Amboise stationed themselves at the windows, whence they amused themselves by casting darts and other missiles at the enraged and bewildered animal.

Highly excited by this novel pastime, bets ran high between the young nobles on their respective skill; and bright eyes watched anxiously the flight of every weapon as it was hurled from the respective casements. Suddenly, however, shrieks of terror echoed through the spacious apartments. The boar, tortured beyond endurance, had made a furious plunge at the door which opened upon the great staircase; had dashed it in, and was rapidly ascending the steps which led to the state rooms, and which were protected only by a hanging drapery of velvet; when the king, rushing from the apartment where the horror-stricken ladies were crowding about the queen, and thrusting aside the courtiers who endeavoured to impede his passage, threw himself full in the path of the maddened animal, and adroitly avoiding his first shock, stabbed him to the heart.

The Duchess d'Angoulême lived in sovereign style in the castle of Amboise. Like Anne de Bretagne, she retained a numerous household, and it was one more calculated than that of her predecessor to increase the attraction of a season of display and festivity; for, while her female attendants had been selected for their personal beauty, they were totally untrammelled by the

wholesome and decent restraints which Anne had laid upon her ladies; and already had the licentious tastes of the prince her son corrupted the little court which she had collected about her, and which had become the focus of intrigue, gallantry, and imprudence. For a time, indeed, the pollution of the heart was not suffered publicly to pollute the lips; but ere long even this tacit observance of propriety was disregarded; and, as it is always easy for a woman to be witty when she lays aside her modesty, so the circle of Madame d'Angoulême soon became renowned as the centre of gay humour and sprightly fascination.

And in the midst of this polluted court lived on the meek and pious Queen Claude, surrounded, like her step-mother, with a band of high-born dames and damsels; but, unlike her, giving to those about her person an example of virtue and self-respect which was strictly imitated; conscious of the irregularities of her husband —for where is the royal personage long permitted to remain in happy ignorance of her own wrongs?—but uncomplaining and patient; a martyr to that keenest of all woman's suffering, a despised and neglected affection. The abandoned conduct of Louise de Savoie, far from vitiating the pure nature of her son's wife, tended only to strengthen her in her own better principles; and like the moon which can look down upon pollution without sullying the purity of its beams, so did the unhappy young queen witness on all sides the degrading progress of licentiousness without losing one virtue, or imbibing one vice. Trained in the most delicate reserve by her mother Anne de Bretagne, she could not condescend to

pander to the dissipated tastes of Francis, who soon wearied of her circle, and found a fertile subject of sarcasm in the austere restraint to which she subjected the ladies of her suite; who, although they were permitted to share in the festivities of the court, were compelled to be so guarded in their conduct and deportment that they were never sullied by its impurities. "Her circle," says Brantôme, "was a paradise on earth, a school of honour and virtue, and the ornament of France, as foreigners were wont to declare when they were admitted within it; for they ever met a courteous reception; and when they were expected, it was the queen's express command that her ladies should attire themselves richly, and exert all their talents for the entertainment of her guests, without absenting themselves in the pursuit of other amusements." It was at Amboise, on the 19th of August, that the queen gave birth to her eldest born, the Princess Louise; whose sex, although doubtless a bitter disappointment to both parents, was not fated to affect the interests of the succession, as she died in her infancy.

The first and greatest anxiety of Francis was the recovery of the Milanese; a design which had been delayed by the death of Louis XII; and, in order to supply the necessary funds for this expedition, he was induced by the advice of his chancellor to renew all the taxes which his predecessor had abolished, and even to expose the offices of the crown for sale; thus endeavouring to replenish his treasury by the most impolitic and arbitrary measures. His claim to the duchy of Milan was declared openly and boldly, as he considered his honour to be involved in its recovery. Louis XII. had

based his presumed right upon the title of a female, and had transferred it to his daughter, the princess Claude, as a portion of her dowry; but Francis, in order to secure it more effectually, caused his wife, as we have already stated, to make over to him her sovereignty of the duchy; and thus to enable him to advance a personal and legitimate claim to its possession.

Charles of Austria, the sovereign of the Low Countries, at the instigation of M. de Chièvres, his governor—who was anxious to preserve a peace with France upon which the prosperity of Flanders was so greatly dependent, as well as to secure to his royal pupil, who was by five years and a half the junior of the French king, the support of that monarch against Ferdinand the Catholic, his maternal grandfather—had already sent ambassadors to congratulate him upon his accession, and to request his friendship; which was not only accorded, but coupled with the promise that Francis would accord to him the hand of his sister-in-law, the Princess Rénée. Her extreme youth, however—for at this period she had only just attained her sixth year—rendering the immediate celebration of the marriage inexpedient, it was stipulated between the two princes that the ceremony should be deferred until she should have reached the age of twelve years, when she was to become the wife of Charles, with a dowry of 200,000 silver crowns in money, and the duchy of Berri, estimated at 400,000 more. A treaty of alliance, both offensive and defensive, was also signed by the contracting parties; and Charles of Austria, although numbering Ferdinand among his allies, pledged himself not to assist him in any attempt which he might

make against France, if he did not, within the space of six months, terminate the misunderstanding existing between the two courts on the subject of the kingdom of Navarre. This treaty was executed at Paris, on the 24th of March.

The ostensible object of the Flemish envoys had been merely to do homage for the counties of Artois and Flanders, which were held by the archduke of the crown of France; and it was so far fortunate for Francis that they should have selected that precise period to visit his court, as it rendered Charles unable to unite with the emperor in any designs which might have proved inimical to the French interest. The mission was entrusted to Count Henri de Nassau,[1] who arrived at Paris splendidly attended, having both nobles and prelates in his train; and it was through his agency that the Archduke, who had already been affianced to half the princesses of the civilized world, was once more engaged in a matrimonial compact, destined, like so many others, never to be ratified. Moreover, it is probable that Francis himself never contemplated its

[1] Henry, Count de Nassau, was the representative of the celebrated ducal family of that name, which traced its origin from Robert, Count de Larenburg and Nassau, in 1124. His descendants, Waleran and Otho, divided their ancestral patrimony in 1255. From the former are descended the present reigning dukes of Nassau; while the latter founded the branch of Nassau-Dillenbourg, now on the throne of Holland. By the marriage of Henry de Nassau, son of Count William III, with Claudine de Challon, Princess of Orange, that principality devolved upon their son Réné, who dying without issue, bequeathed it to William the Taciturn, his cousin; who thus became the ancestor of the princes of Orange-Nassau, whose descendants occupy the thrones of England and Holland.

completion; while it is certain that the ministers of the young prince had been urged to effect a friendly alliance with France, from their suspicion that Ferdinand the Catholic purposed to bequeath the crown of Spain to his other grandson and namesake, who had been educated in that country: while Charles, who had passed his youth between Germany and the Low Countries, was comparatively unknown to him.

Nor was the errand of M. de Nassau destined to be a bootless one for himself; it being secretly stipulated that he should receive the hand of Claudine de Challon, sister of the Prince of Orange, who had been educated with the young Queen of France; and the marriage was accordingly celebrated with a magnificence worthy of so renowned a court.

The state of Europe at this time offered nothing sufficiently alarming to induce the young king to abandon his design upon the Milanese. Spain was for the moment tranquil. The death of the Archduke Philip had restored to Ferdinand his dominion over Castile; while his title to Naples, Roussillon and Cerdagne was not sufficiently valid to enable him to take the initiative with safety in any aggressive measures towards France. Germany was also at peace; and so divided and subdivided into petty and independent states, as well as kept in check by the moral and commercial strength of her free towns, and the impotence of her emperor—who, although the head of the Germanic body, by which, in the national diets, the laws were passed, was a mere shadow-king, despised both at home and abroad,—that she was in no condition to volunteer a war of which the issue, under

such circumstances, must at the best be doubtful; while England, who had upon Flodden Field delivered herself from her most threatening and mischievous enemy, had already gained sufficient experience of the bad faith and perfidious vacillation of both Maximilian and Ferdinand, to induce Henry VIII. to shun any alliance with either against the interests of Francis, who, in the late negotiations between them, had won his good will alike by his frankness and courtesy.

Thus the pope and the Swiss were the only formidable enemies against whom the young monarch of France could be called upon to contend; and the arrival of the several embassies to compliment him upon his accession, afforded a favourable opportunity for consolidating his friendly relations with such of the different powers as were already on terms of amity with France; and also of ascertaining, and providing against, the possible hostility of those whose alliance was still doubtful.

To the English envoys he suggested that the treaty of peace concluded between Louis XII. and Henry VIII. should be renewed; and that Scotland, did the necessity arise, should be included in the negotiations; that the most perfect liberty of commerce should be assured to both nations; that no vessel of war intended to threaten either should be admitted into any of the ports of the other kingdom; and that they should mutually respect each other's allies; but that Milan and Genoa, which Francis was about to invade, should be exempted from this arrangement. To all these conditions Henry acceded at once with the exception of that which concerned Scotland; the jealousy of the English monarch

being awakened by the circumstance that the Duke d'Aubigny,[1] the cousin of the late King of Scots, and the subject of Francis, had been invited thither as regent. He accordingly called upon the young sovereign to pledge himself that D'Aubigny, who was well known to be inimical to the English interests, should abandon his intention of visiting Scotland; and declared that should this concession be made, he would at once affix his signature to the treaty. Francis, however, would not consent to withdraw his plighted word to the Scotch; but offered himself as surety for the loyalty of his general; and agreed, that if in the space of three months d'Aubigny did not succeed in reconciling the adverse factions, he should be recalled.

Henry accepted the offered terms; and the treaty was concluded in the month of April.

The Swiss cantons, excepting only the Grisons, still maintained their hostile position towards France. During the reigns of Louis XI. and Charles VIII. they had considered themselves as an integral portion of the French armies; and had conduced, in no trifling degree, to their success in the field. Even under Louis XII. they had done good service, and proved their efficiency; while the benefit was rendered mutual by the fact that the poverty of their over-populated country was lessened by the escape-valve thus afforded; and that support and employment were obtained for considerable bodies of

[1] Robert d'Aubigny was of Scotch extraction, and of the family of Stuart, but was by birth a French subject, and commanded the company of Scotch gendarmes who were perpetually about the person of the monarch, and who possessed extraordinary privileges.

men who must otherwise have diminished its already scanty resources. Conscious of their importance in European warfare from their high state of discipline and undaunted courage, the Switzers had, however, by presuming upon these advantages, excited the indignation of Louis XII; who, anxious to emancipate himself from pretensions and demands which ultimately exceeded all due bounds, declined their further assistance; and substituted for them a large body of German infantry, or lansquenets, who, while they were utterly free from the insolence and waywardness of the Swiss, were from the first their equals in courage, and soon worthily rivalled them both in order and discipline. This was at once an affront to the honour, and an injury to the interests, of the mountaineers, which they vowed never to forgive. They forgot that even if they had twice assisted the French king to subdue Italy, they had twice also, in order to gratify their own dislike, lent their aid to divest him of his conquest; and although they had amply revenged their supposed wrongs both at Novara and Dijon, they bore in remembrance only the refusal of Louis to ratify the treaty of La Tremouille; and suffered the relentless Cardinal of Sion to keep them in a state of perpetual and unyielding animosity to France. Thus the attitude which they assumed could not be utterly disregarded by Francis, although, with the chivalrous feeling natural to him, he looked upon them with contempt as mere mercenaries, and did not suffer their demonstrations to interfere with his darling project; although he deemed it expedient to make an effort to regain their alliance; and accordingly sent the Sire de Jamets, one of the sons of

Robert de la Mark, as his envoy to the diet of the Cantons, in order that an accommodation might if possible be effected with them, and the differences adjusted which had arisen out of the non-fulfilment of the treaty of Dijon. This concession was, however, far from conducing to the object which he had in view. Rendered insolent by their recent successes, the Swiss ascribed to fear an overture which had been dictated simply by policy, and arrogantly refused to admit the envoy of France; threatening, moreover, that if the conditions of that treaty were not immediately performed to the letter, they would forthwith invade the provinces of Burgundy and Dauphiny.

Francis treated the insolent menace with contempt; and contented himself by marching a strong body both of native and foreign troops towards Burgundy; ostensibly to defend that province from aggression, but actually to bring them nearer to the point where they were to be employed.

Consequently this movement, ominous as it was, created no alarm either in the pope, or the Italian states which were in his interest. They looked upon the French king as a mere youth, devoted to pleasure, who would not hazard an encounter with the papal forces; nor could even the representations of Ferdinand induce them to alter their opinion. In vain did he represent that Francis had suggested a treaty with himself and Maximilian, which had failed to take effect owing to the refusal of the young monarch to forego his claim upon the Milanese; and that he had already confirmed that which Louis XII. had formerly made with the Venetians. Leo X.

disregarded the caution; and even declined to join a league which had been secretly formed between Maximilian, Ferdinand, the Swiss, and the Duke of Milan, for the defence of Italy; declaring that he was urged by his holy office to promote peace rather than war, and would not provoke, or even appear to anticipate, hostilities from any European power.

In confirming the treaty with the Venetians to which Ferdinand had alluded, Francis had secretly induced Ottavio Fregosa, the doge of Genoa, to give a pledge that he would abdicate, and place himself under the protection of France, whenever the presence of a French army sufficiently strong to protect him from the indignation of the other powers should be assembled in Italy; a promise which the young king hailed with joy, as Genoa commanded the passage into the Milanese by sea, and was consequently of great importance to his design. This done, he pursued his negotiation with the Pope, who at length consented to remain neuter; but who, at the same time, entered into an engagement with Maximilian, Ferdinand, and the Swiss, to assist them in protecting the duchy of Milan.

In the meantime Francis had continued quietly but diligently to strengthen the forces requisite for his intended expedition. While he himself left Paris, and took up his abode at Amboise, his army was gradually advancing to the frontiers of Dauphiny. It consisted of a band of ten thousand lansquenets, raised in Germany by the Sire de Sedan, and the Duke of Suffolk; six thousand foot, furnished by the Duke de Gueldres; and a like number levied in Gascony and Languedoc

by Pietro da Navarro, whom the ingratitude and bad faith of the King of Spain had driven into the service of France; four thousand volunteers; two thousand five hundred lances; a strong body of artillery, which had already been sent forward to Lyons; and six thousand Gascon foot-soldiers, led by Pietro da Navarro, who had formerly commanded the Spanish infantry; composing altogether an army of between thirty and forty thousand men.

While this force was unostentatiously in progress of organization, Francis—who, however little he deprecated the hostility of the pope, whom he knew to be more occupied in the aggrandizement of his family than in that of his states, thought it wise to conciliate his alliance—sent an embassy to Rome to open a negotiation between them, which he entrusted to Guillaume Budée,[1] the contemporary and friend of Erasmus, and one of the most accomplished scholars in France. Already aware of the particular ambition of Leo X, who was anxious to secure the supreme rule in Florence to his nephew Lorenzo de' Medici; and to his brother Giulio a principality compounded of the states which his predecessor Julius II. had wrested from the Duke de Ferrara and the Milanese; Budeé offered on the part of his royal master to assist His Holiness in effecting the marriage between his brother

[1] Guillaume Budée was born in Paris in 1467, and distinguished himself by his extraordinary attainments. He was Master of the Court of Requests, and Librarian to the King; and was remarkable for his proficiency in the classics and archæology. His most celebrated work among students is his treatise, *De Asse et partibus ejus*, which was published at Venice in 1522. It was at his instigation that Francis I. founded the College of France. He died in 1540.

Giulio and Marguerite de Savoie, the aunt of the French king, which had already been mooted, and which must have tended to convert the two sovereigns into firm allies; but the pope could not willingly resign his own darling scheme; and amiable and learned as he was, and fully competent to appreciate the compliment paid to him by Francis in the person and through the medium of so celebrated an ambassador, he was nevertheless possessed of all the craft peculiar to his nation; and hesitated between this amicable proposition and that of Maximilian and Ferdinand, which he believed would be ultimately more advantageous to his house. He consequently amused Budée for a time with objections, exactions, and mystifications so obviously unmeaning and insincere, that the frank and straightforward scholar at length resolved to request his recal; alleging that he was unable to cope with the diplomatic cunning of the sovereign pontiff; and humbly praying his majesty to release him from a responsibility to which he was unequal. He was, however, instructed to remain at the papal court, and to continue the negotiation, whatever might be its probable issue, in order to divert the attention of Leo from an intrigue in which his interests were involved, and which was then pending.

CHAPTER VII.

[1515.]

FRANCIS ORGANIZES HIS ARMY — THE QUEEN'S FAREWELL RECEPTION — MAGNIFICENCE OF BOURBON — EMOTION OF MARGUERITE DE VALOIS — JEALOUSY OF BONNIVET — THEIR PARTING — INDISCRETION OF BONNIVET — DIFFICULTY IN REPLENISHING THE TREASURY — DISCONTENT OF THE PARLIAMENT — MADAME D'ANGOULÊME APPOINTED REGENT — CHARACTER OF LOUISE DE SAVOIE — AMOUNT OF THE FRENCH ARMY — ITS DISTRIBUTION — DIFFICULTY IN PASSING THE ALPS — PERSEVERANCE OF THE TROOPS — THE VAN-GUARD ENTERS ITALY — SURPRISE OF PROSPER COLONNA — HIS CAPTURE — DELIVERS HIS SWORD TO BAYARD — ALESSANDRIA AND TORTONA TAKEN BY THE FRENCH — ALARM OF THE POPE — RETREAT OF THE SWISS — FRANCIS ENDEAVOURS TO CONCILIATE THEM, BUT FAILS THROUGH THE AGENCY OF THE CARDINAL OF SION — THE SWISS TROOPS ATTEMPT TO SEIZE THE PUBLIC CHEST AT BUFFALORO — THEIR LEADERS APPRISE LAUTREC OF THE PROJECT — THEY EVACUATE ITALY — BAYARD SOLICITS THE KING'S PERMISSION TO ATTACK THE ENEMY, BUT IS REFUSED — FRANCIS MARCHES UPON TURIN — HE IS JOINED BY THE DUKE DE GUELDRES — THE FRENCH HEAD-QUARTERS ARE ESTABLISHED AT MARIGNANO — CARDONA REFUSES TO PASS THE PO — D'ALVIANO REACHES LODI — INDIGNATION OF FRANCIS AGAINST THE SWISS — THE CARDINAL OF SION HARANGUES THE MERCENARY TROOPS — FLEURANGES ALARMS THE GARRISON — THE SWISS TROOPS MARCH UPON MARIGNANO — THE KING IS APPRISED OF THEIR APPROACH — BATTLE OF MARIGNANO — FRANCIS NARROWLY ESCAPES CAPTURE — BAYARD IS UNHORSED, BUT EFFECTS HIS RETREAT — THE BATTLE-COUCH OF FRANCIS — THE ATTACK IS RESUMED AT DAYBREAK — THE SWISS TROOPS RETREAT, AND RETURN TO MILAN, WHENCE THEY PROCEED HOMEWARD, PURSUED BY D'ALVIANO — THE PRICE OF VICTORY — FRANCIS RECEIVES KNIGHTHOOD ON THE FIELD AT THE HANDS OF BAYARD, AND CONFERS IT UPON FLEURANGES — THE FRENCH MARCH TO MILAN — THE SWISS REVOLT AGAINST THE CARDINAL OF SION, WHO SECURES HIS SAFETY BY FLIGHT — RECEPTION OF THE FRENCH KING BY THE CITIZENS OF MILAN — MAXIMILIAN SFORZA SURRENDERS TO FRANCIS — GENEROSITY OF THE CONQUEROR — THE MILANESE TAKE THE OATH OF ALLEGIANCE TO FRANCE.

CHAPTER VII.

[1515.]

MEANWHILE the warlike preparations of Francis were completed; and he formally assisted the queen and his mother to receive at Amboise the parting compliments of his generals in the presence of the whole court. The queen had a public reception on the day upon which the Constable-duke de Bourbon, who was to take the chief command of the invading army, arrived at the castle. His advent had been already announced; and it chanced that either by accident or design the Duchess d'Alençon, who had accompanied her husband to the castle, there to remain while he was absent with the king in Italy, was standing in the deep bay of a window in the apartment of her royal sister-in-law, conversing with some of the courtiers, at the moment when the connétable galloped into the court-yard, attended by an escort of gentlemen and pages very richly attired. At the noise made by the horsemen every eye was turned upon the brilliant spectacle which thus suddenly presented itself, and was instantly riveted on the person of Bourbon himself. He was attired for war; and wore over his mail a sash of cloth of silver; a diamond-studded poniard flashed in his belt beside the golden pom-

mel of his sword, and his casque was surmounted by a plume of white and crimson feathers. In such a costume the fine person of the duke was necessarily more than usually striking; and the beautiful sister of Francis, after gazing for an instant, like those around her, upon the majestic and noble figure of the only man whom she had ever loved, turned away with a shuddering sigh, and involuntarily glanced with a look of superb contempt upon the insignificant prince to whom the policy of her uncle Louis XII. had given her unwilling hand.

Neither the sigh, the shudder, nor the glance, brief as each had been in its duration, had, despite all her caution, passed unobserved. Among those immediately about her was Bonnivet, who had neither forgiven nor forgotten the past, and whose jealousy of Bourbon continued as lively as ever, although the marriage of the duchess had rendered the suit of both alike hopeless. A bitter whisper reached her ear: "Monsieur le Connétable;" said the voice; "whose haughty spirit has become a proverb throughout the country, might to-day be pardoned his presumption were he to learn the effect produced by his arrival."

Marguerite blushed deeply, frowned haughtily, and turned away; but the arrow had stricken home, and she could not encounter the mocking eye that she felt was turned upon her.

By this time the connétable had ascended the great staircase; had been announced by the usher on duty; and had entered the royal apartment, still attended by the gentlemen of his suite, superbly attired in vests of velvet heavily embroidered with gold. It was now the

king's turn to frown. It was true that by his marriage with the daughter of Anne of France, Bourbon had become the most wealthy, as well as the most powerful noble of the kingdom; but Francis could not endure that his own magnificence should be eclipsed by that of a subject, and his reception was more chilling than the occasion seemed to warrant. The duke did not, however, appear to remark the discomposure of his sovereign; and the warm greeting of Madame d'Angoulême, who was by no means insensible to the attractions of her new guest, was returned with grace and composure. Nor did even the stately coldness of the Duchess d'Alençon bring a shade upon the brow of Charles de Bourbon: he could appreciate her real feelings, for he judged them by his own; and as he raised her fingers respectfully to his lips, he did not detain them there a moment.

Bonnivet, however, who had watched both parties closely, was not to be deceived. He had marked the slight flush which mounted to the brow of the duke, and the deadly paleness that had overspread the features of the princess; and as, after this act of homage, Bourbon moved away to join the circle which was formed about the king, he turned to the Count de Saint Valier, the captain of the royal guard, and in a tone of mysterious confidence bade him remark the agitation of Madame d'Angoulême, and the constraint of her daughter.

"It is sufficiently evident;" was the reply; "but why do you draw my attention to the circumstance?"

"To initiate you into a state secret. The mother and the daughter have the same passion in their hearts."

The quick-sighted Bonnivet was correct in his conjecture; but he was unable to discriminate the very

different nature of the passion which Bourbon had awakened in the breasts of those two royal ladies. The love of Louise de Savoie for the gallant and handsome prince was, like all her other attachments, alike sensual and selfish; while that of Marguerite was an affection compounded of memory, regret, and self-pity, without one stain of earth. The duke had been the first love of her girlhood, and had peopled the past with associations of happiness and hope, both of which had proved fallacious, but were still dear. Whatever may have been the errors of Marguerite, it is certain that she loved Bourbon well and worthily; with that womanly affection which forgets self in the object beloved, and can endure in all its intensity alike through time and trial.

In the utterance of her murmured farewell to the brilliant connétable, the Duchess d'Alençon had exhausted all her regrets; and it was consequently with courteous composure, that she afterwards received the parting compliments of François, Duke de Châtellerault, his brother; the Marshals de la Palice and Trivulzio; the Dukes of Lorraine, Vendôme, Gueldres, and D'Aubigny; the Bastard of Savoy, the king's uncle,[1] the veteran Louis

[1] René, the Bastard of Savoy, was the son of Philip of Savoy and Bona da Romagnano, a Piedmontese lady, and the brother of Charles III. and Madame d'Angoulême; and had been legitimized by the Duke Philibert, who married Marguerite d'Autriche, the daughter of the emperor. Maximilian having, however, refused to ratify his legitimization, René accused Marguerite of having privately instigated him to do so; and, indignant at the affront put upon him, abandoned the court of Savoy, and withdrew to the castle of Amboise, where he resided with his sister, Madame d'Angoulême, and obtained great influence over Francis I. Whether his suspicion were well or ill founded, it is certain that the hatred which Marguerite felt for him caused as much injury to Savoy, as that of Madame d'An-

de Brézé, Grand Sénéchal of Normandy; the Counts of Saint-Pol and Guise; La Tremouille, and his son the Prince de Talmont, Imbercourt, Téligny, Béarn, Sancerre, Orval, Lautrec, Bayard; and, in fine, all that was noble and chivalrous in France.

The necessity of raising money to meet the exigencies of so formidable an undertaking as the recovery of the Milanese, was the first difficulty to which Francis had been exposed since his accession to the throne; and it is probable that, at so important a moment, he regretted the immense sums which had been wasted upon mere courtly magnificence; but Duprat, ever equal to every emergency, at once suggested the dangerous and impolitic measure of increasing the number of judicial offices for sale. The young king, eager to carry out his plans, thoughtlessly welcomed the suggestion; and a new chamber of parliament was created, consisting of twenty councillors, all of whom purchased their places; while the provincial courts

goulême against the Connétable de Bourbon occasioned to France. "Through Marguerite d'Autriche, the wife of the duke;" says the President Hénault; "commenced that hatred which has perpetuated itself between the houses of France and Austria." The fact is, however, doubtful; for the feelings of the emperor her father had been for years quite as hostile as her own; and it is asserted that he every day nourished them by a perusal of what he entitled his *red book*, which was simply a register of all the real or imaginary wrongs to which he had been subjected by France, and which yet remained unavenged; not the least being the humiliation to which his daughter had been exposed when her hand was refused by Charles VIII. Réné strikingly resembled his father: his form was athletic, and his countenance fine and commanding. He was a brave soldier, but both haughty and vindictive. Francis I, his nephew, made him Comptroller of the Household. He was taken prisoner at Pavia, and died of his wounds. From him is derived the family of Villars.

throughout the kingdom were augmented in the same manner. For a time the parliament of Paris refused to sanction so glaring an innovation upon their rights, and declined to register the royal edict; nor was it without considerable and avowed reluctance that they were ultimately induced to do so; the measure being regarded as one of great injustice and impolicy, tending to diminish the national confidence in the monarch, and to excite distrust towards the minister by whom it had been proposed.

Their objections were, however, disregarded; and Francis, satisfied that he was about to place himself at the head of the finest army which had ever been raised in France, made instant preparations for crossing the Alps. The number and resources of his enemies, concentrated by the powerful confederacy formed against him by Maximilian, Leo X, and the Swiss, served only to stimulate his ardour; and, on the 15th of July, at Lyons, he issued an ordinance, by which he appointed his mother, the Duchess d'Angoulême, regent of the kingdom during his absence. "Considering;" thus ran the document; "that it will be necessary to leave in our kingdom some personage representing ourselves, whose affection towards our person is undoubted, and to whom our subjects may have recourse as to ourselves; considering also that all the princes and nobles of our blood accompany us on our enterprise; we have decided to confide this charge and power to our very dear and well-beloved lady and mother, the Duchess d'Angoulême and d'Anjou, as to the person in whom we have full and perfect confidence; and of whom we know, for a surety, that she will wisely and virtuously acquit herself of the same." ...

In how far Francis could answer to his conscience for such a declaration, it is not for us to decide. Certain it is that the over-weening indulgence and undiminished influence of his mother may have blinded him in a great degree to her defects: but it is no less true that he possessed sufficient shrewdness and discrimination to be aware that, with so vehement and vindictive a character as her's, there was not that perfect assurance for his subjects which his words were intended to convey.

Although, upon the accession of her son, she had reached her fortieth year, Louise de Savoie was still one of the handsomest women at court. The peculiar charms of her face and person were scarcely diminished by time, and she possessed, physically, all the elements of popularity. She was, moreover, eminently qualified for government in so far that she did not lack courage, either personal or political; and was gifted with penetration, decision, and a self-possession which no adversity could shake: but these essential qualities were counterbalanced by an ambition and thirst of power absolutely insatiable; while her better reason was frequently overwhelmed by the impetuous torrent of her passions; a circumstance which sullied her administration with all the faults and weaknesses of her sex. Greedy of admiration, and vain to an inordinate excess, she was at the same time a bitter enemy, implacable in her resentments, impatient of control, actuated by the most malign jealousy, and covetous of the national treasures to such an extent, that the wisest projects were disconcerted, and the most important enterprises baffled, by her insatiate rapacity.

The regency being thus definitely arranged, Francis turned his whole attention to the organisation and distribution of his army, which, after the new levies were completed, consisted of two thousand five hundred men-at-arms; amounting, in fact, from the peculiar constitution of the "lances," as they were then termed, to a force of nearly fifteen thousand horse; each member of the *compagnies d'ordonnance*, or regular cavalry, having in immediate attendance upon him, three archers, an esquire, or knife-bearer, whose name was derived from a short dirk which he carried in his belt, and a page; the whole of whom were mounted; and thus fifteen hundred "lances," fully equipped, comprised a strength of nine thousand horse; while in addition to this conventional suite, they were generally accompanied by a strong body of volunteers, similarly followed, who served without remuneration of any kind, and who were invariably individuals of good family, like the gendarmes themselves, and frequently entered the regular army after having gone through a campaign upon their own resources.

The command of the vanguard was confided to the Connétable de Bourbon, and in it were to serve his brother the Duke de Chatellerault, La Palice, Trivulzio, Talmond, Bonnivet, Imbercourt, and Téligny; while Pietro da Navarro, with his Gascons, Basques, and pioneers, were also attached to this division of the army. The rearguard was committed to the Duke d'Alençon, the husband of Marguerite: and the king himself commanded the main-body or "battle;" having about his person the Dukes of Vendôme and Lorraine, the Seigneur d'Aubigny, the Bastard of Savoy, the Sire d'Orval,

La Tremouille, Lautrec, recently advanced to the rank of Marshal of France, Bayard, newly appointed Lieutenant-general of Dauphiny, the Duke de Gueldres, and Claude de Guise.

But when this powerful army, amounting in the aggregate to upwards of 40,000 men, with a strong train of artillery, was completed, the greatest difficulty was yet to be surmounted, by accomplishing its passage into Italy. The month of August had arrived, the snow had dissolved in the mountain-gorges, it is true; but some unforeseen circumstance might impede the march, and subject the troops to a scarcity of provisions, while it was moreover imperative that they should penetrate into the Milanese before the rainy season set in. "A safe but circuitous route presented itself;" says Bacon; "by which one part of the army might penetrate to Savona, and the other might march by the county of Tende, towards Montferrat, but the delay which would ensue rendered this plan in eligible." The passes between Mont Cenis and Mont Genièvre were so strongly guarded by the Swiss, as to render it highly inexpedient to expose the army to the inevitable losses which must accrue from any attempt to force them, and thus weaken its resources; and consequently great doubt existed as to the practicability of making good the passage of horsemen and ordnance across the Alps. The difficulty was, however, happily overcome by the proposal of a Piedmontese peasant, a vassal of the Count de Moreto, the cousin of Bayard—whose perfect acquaintance with all the intricacies of the mountain-chain rendered him an admirable guide—to point out a path which was comparatively unknown, and

of which the Swiss had evinced their entire ignorance by leaving it totally unprotected. For a time the count treated the suggestion with indifference, declaring that it was impassable for a large army; but the pertinacity of his follower at length induced him to explore it, when his doubts were shaken; and having waited upon the Duke of Savoy to solicit his permission to profit by the discovery, he immediately started for Lyons to communicate to the king the result of his investigation. The proposition was submitted to the council, who, after some deliberation, decided that if, after a careful survey of the pass, the attempt appeared practicable, it should be made; and as a preliminary measure, the Sire de Lautrec and Pietro da Navarro, who were esteemed the most competent judges upon such a subject—the one from his fondness for adventure and boldness in confronting difficulties, and the other from his mechanical skill and knowledge—were despatched to examine the pass, and to report upon its practicability. They were accompanied by the Maréchals Trivulzio and La Palice, the Count de Moreto, and his vassal; and the whole extent of the formidable pass was strictly surveyed; when it was ascertained that the difficulties, although great and various, were nevertheless not insurmountable if effectual measures were taken; and, upon the delivery of this opinion, it was at once resolved that the attempt should be made.

Detachments were marched towards Mont Cenis and Mont Genièvre to distract and mislead the attention of the enemy; and, all being in readiness, the vanguard of the French army forded the Durance; and,

followed by the remainder of the troops, entered the mountain-chain on the Guillestre side, and commenced their gigantic undertaking. Never had the zeal and skill of Navarro availed so much. Under his directions roads were levelled, ravines filled up, trees felled, and rocks rent from their bases; bridges thrown over torrents, and the cannon dragged by hand across precipitous heights, and along narrow ledges, where it was impossible to entrust their safety to other than human strength.

No one who has not traversed the Alps—not by the roads now formed, but among the wild and rugged ravines known only to the mountain hunter, who even to this day reveals them grudgingly to the inquisitive and adventurous traveller—can for an instant comprehend, and far less appreciate, all the labour, danger, and uncertainty of such an enterprise as that now undertaken by the French army. As the troops advanced upon their perilous way, their difficulties increased. Nature, in all the majesty of her most formidable horrors, appeared to frown upon their audacity. The roaring of the winds that growled through the deep and dark gullies by which they were surrounded; the hollow crashing of the tools with which the pioneers seemed to be cleaving into the very heart of the rocky mountains; the avalanches which, disturbed by this unwonted intrusion, came thundering down with an impetuosity that mocked the most steady gaze; the cataracts which leapt from ledge to ledge until they poured their vexed and boiling tide into some unseen depth below; the perpetual loss of life which was occasioned by the sudden dislodgement of loosened masses

that rolled into the abyss, and ultimately fell with a crash which sounded like the ruin of a world; all these impediments failed to discourage the ardour of the French soldiery. Conquest was before them, and they toiled on uncomplainingly until the mighty task was accomplished, and they descended safely into the valley of Stura, near the town of Coni, in the territories of the Marquis de Saluzzo, a firm ally of the French crown, with all their heavy cavalry, and seventy pieces of ordnance. All the estates of Saluzzo had been invaded by the enemy, and all his strongholds taken, save the castle of Ravello, which, owing to its extreme strength, had been enabled to make an effectual resistance; while the other fortresses, whence his troops had been driven out, were occupied by Swiss garrisons, and his lands harried and aid waste by the forces of Prosper Colonna,[1] an able and experienced general, who commanded the army of the coalition, and to whom the Duke of Milan had entrusted the passes of the Alps, which were defended by a force of 20,000 Swiss.

Courageous as he was, however, the personal bravery of Colonna was not more conspicuous than his arrogance; and while he awaited the approach of the French army, he affected the utmost contempt for the enemy against which he was to contend; even carrying his presumption so far as to appropriate to himself the county of Carmagnola, after having arranged with the Swiss to

[1] Prosper Colonna was the son of Antonio, Prince of Salerno. He defeated the French army at the battle of La Bicocca, in 1522, and died in the course of the succeeding year, with the reputation of an able general.

dispossess the Duke of Savoy of his dominions, as the forfeit which he was to pay for aiding and abetting his nephew, Francis I, in his designs on the Milanese.

The vanguard of the French army had scarcely descended into the plain of Stura, when they were informed that Colonna had established his quarters in the fortress of Carmagnola, where, confident in his security, he had even disdained to take such precautions as a better policy would have prompted. The spirit of French chivalry was at once aroused by this intelligence; and La Palice, D'Aubigny, Imbercourt, Bayard, Montmorency, and Bussy d'Amboise, resolved to make an attempt to surprise him in his stronghold. They accordingly advanced towards Carmagnola at the head of a body of men-at-arms carefully selected for the purpose; and while the Roman general was watching the progress of the main army over a pass which he considered as the most hazardous that could be contemplated, he never anticipated that a little band of adventurers would make their way by that of Rocca Sparviera, which he believed to be utterly impracticable for cavalry.

Such an attempt was however made, and successfully accomplished; but, on their arrival at Carmagnola, the courageous party found that Colonna was no longer there, but was moving towards Villa Franca, a small town upon the Po, where he frequently halted, and, as they ascertained, was that day to dine, before he proceeded to Pignerol, where he had convened a council of war.

Bayard earnestly proposed an immediate pursuit; which being acceded to by his companions, the Count de Moreto was despatched, disguised as a peasant, to hang

upon the skirts of the enemy's army, consisting of three hundred mounted gendarmes, and some troops of light horse, and to ascertain the order of their march. Upon his return he confirmed the intelligence they had already received, that in full assurance of his security, Colonna was advancing leisurely towards his destination, rather like a private traveller riding through his own territories, than a general who was prepared to encounter an enemy.

Once assured of this fact, their arrangements were speedily completed, and they were forthwith in movement. Imbercourt led the van with a hundred archers, supported by Bayard with a like number of picked men, about an arrow's flight behind; while the rear was closed by La Palice and D'Aubigny. But although they advanced silently and with great precaution, they did not succeed in escaping observation; and Colonna was soon apprised by one of his spies that a French force was tracking his footsteps. He however treated the matter lightly; and being at the moment on his way to attend mass, he merely remarked that it could only be Bayard and his band, unless the remainder of the army had flown over the mountains; and contented himself, as he was entering the church, by despatching a second emissary to ascertain the real strength of the advancing party.

On the conclusion of the service he was informed by his messenger that he was pursued by more than a thousand French cavalry; but, although startled by the intelligence, he was still doubtful of the fact, declaring that the man's fears had exaggerated the number of the

enemy, but that he would, nevertheless, ere long repay Bayard for the inconvenience to which he was subjected through his agency, by taking him like a pigeon in a trap; and as he seated himself at table, he impatiently desired one of his gentlemen to put himself at the head of a score of horse, to ride back a mile or two on the road to Carmagnola, and to inform him if any danger of a surprise really existed.

He then quietly commenced his repast; but he was not long destined to retain his arrogant tranquillity, for the meal was not concluded when a cry of alarm became audible, and shouts of "France! France!" echoed through the narrow streets of the little town.

The reconnoitering party had come in sight of the French troops, long ere they anticipated an encounter for which they were totally unprepared, and on witnessing their numbers they at once turned and fled. Imbercourt, however, followed them up so closely that he entered the gates of Villa Franca simultaneously with the fugitives, and before the sentinels, who were fearful of injuring their own comrades, had time to fire a shot. The post once gained, he retained it, although wounded in the face, until he was joined by Bayard; nor could all the after-attempts of the garrison enable them to retake it.

For a brief time the conflict was a severe one; but the arrival of La Palice and D'Aubigny soon rendered all further opposition on the part of the papal forces utterly hopeless. Both the gates were secured to prevent their egress, and only two Albanian soldiers escaped over the plank adjoining the drawbridge, who fled

wildly towards a strong body of Swiss, encamped within three miles of Villa Franca, with intelligence of the disaster.

Surprised, but not subdued, Colonna made a futile attempt to defend himself; but the house which he occupied was surrounded, his garrison made prisoners, and all escape rendered impracticable. In this strait, he demanded to be informed who were his captors, and he no sooner ascertained their names than, with all the vehemence of his nation, he abandoned himself to the most violent grief, cursing his fate, and lamenting that God had not permitted him to meet them in the field.

Bayard received the sword which he at length reluctantly and sullenly resigned, with a courtesy and respect which, in a calmer moment, must have gone far to console him; but he could remember only the mortification to which he had subjected himself by his own want of caution, and continually exclaimed; "Would to God that I had met them in a fair field, even if I had perished there!"

Many other prisoners of rank were taken, and among the rest the Count de Policastro, Piero Morgante, and Carolo Cadamosto, all good and approved soldiers; while the booty exceeded even the wildest hopes of the victors. "Had it been well managed;" says the Loyal Servant, in the true chapman spirit of the age, when it is certain that all ranks of the army thought nearly as much of the ransom to be obtained for their prisoners as of the glory of defeating them; "it might have been made to yield a hundred and fifty thousand ducats." Suffice it, that by the capture of Villa Franca the French secured, besides

other spoils, seven hundred horses, of which about four hundred were of pure Andalusian race; while Colonna himself lost on that disastrous day more than fifty thousand ducats in gold and silver plate, jewels, and money.

Nor was this the only success with which the campaign opened for Francis. A body of troops had been despatched to Genoa by sea, under the command of Aimar de Prie, the grand master of the cross-bow men, and intelligence was received a short time subsequently to the capture of Colonna, that they had reached their destination in safety, had been warmly welcomed, and that their strength had been augmented by a force of four thousand Genoese who had enlisted under their banner, and with whose co-operation they had surprised and taken Alessandria and Tortona, and possessed themselves of the whole of the Milanese on that bank of the Po.

The discomfiture of Colonna had, meanwhile, disconcerted all the measures taken by the allied sovereigns to secure the defence of Lombardy. The pope hastily issued an order to his nephew, Lorenzo de' Medici, to halt the pontifical army within the frontiers of Modena; and at the same time despatched a trusty messenger to assure the French king of his neutrality; while Raymond de Cardona, who had concentrated the Spanish forces in the neighbourhood of Verona, awaited in vain the money which had been promised to him by Ferdinand, and the German troops with which he was to have been reinforced by Maximilian; and meanwhile, closely pressed by the Venetian general, who occupied the Polesino de Rovego, he could neither advance nor retreat.

Thus the Swiss found themselves, at a most critical moment, abandoned by their allies. Moreover, their arrears of pay, amounting to forty thousand florins, had not reached them; they considered themselves disgraced by the success of the French army in crossing the Alps, which they had undertaken to prevent; and were exasperated by the contempt with which they were regarded by the better disciplined and more soldier-like forces of a nation towards which their hatred was unmitigated: but the wound which rankled the most deeply in the hearts of the mercenary mountaineers was the non-arrival of their salary, which so enraged them against both the pope and the Viceroy of Naples, that they robbed the chest of the pontifical commissary, and retired in disorder to Verceil.

At this precise moment the French generals were pressing forward to Milan, without any other impediment to their entrance into that city than these same Switzers, who, at Galerata, on the road from Milan to the Simplon, appeared to be about to abandon the defence of Italy. Anxious to effect a reconciliation with these mischievous antagonists, Francis, who had never entertained towards them the same dislike which had been manifested by his predecessor, and who was aware that several of their most esteemed leaders were in his interest, particularly Jean de Diesbach, Albert de la Pierre, and George de Supersax Valaisan, caused them to be followed to Galerata by commissaries who were empowered to accord to them whatever sum they might demand, on condition that they would lay down their arms. Aware of their value in the field, he was

anxious to purchase their friendship, and to repay their allegiance to himself at their own price; and, as the proposition met with no repulse, and they thus saw an opportunity of at once satisfying their rapacity and their revenge, M. de Lautrec and the Bastard of Savoy ultimately agreed to promise them seven hundred thousand crowns.

Meanwhile the coalesced princes, desirous as soon as they witnessed the formidable attitude assumed by Francis, to consolidate by a treaty of peace the few days of truce which were rapidly waning to a close, and if possible to induce the king to withdraw to a greater distance from Milan, entered into a negotiation with him to that effect; but so certain did it appear that the young monarch would, should he comply with their wish for a cessation of hostilities, be enabled to dictate his own terms, that the Duke de Gueldres, whose presence was needed in his own dominions to check the aggressions of the Brabanters, withdrew from the army; leaving his troops under the command of his nephew, Claude de Lorraine, Duke de Guise, brother of the reigning prince. He was, however, premature; for while the negotiations were still pending, and before the arrangement could be concluded, a reinforcement of ten thousand Switzers who had just crossed the Alps to share the fortunes of their countrymen, and the powerful exhortations of the celebrated Cardinal of Sion, the sworn enemy of France, sufficed to dissuade the mercenaries from their purpose, and to put an end to the treaty altogether. The new comers, resolved not to have made a bootless journey, declared that they would

not return home empty-handed while those who had preceded them were gorged with booty; and proposed that the money which the French king had deposited at Buffaloro for the payment of his troops should be carried off. The scheme was a tempting one to the avaricious mountaineers, and met with almost universal welcome; but Jean de Diesbach and Albert de la Pierre, who had hitherto possessed great influence, finding themselves unable to dissuade their followers from so disgraceful an enterprise, returned to their own country with six or seven thousand men; and, it is believed, warned Lautrec of the contemplated attack.

Inspired by the eloquence of the Cardinal, the Swiss were once more eager to meet those in arms to whom they had been about to sell their services; and their old hatred against France was again revived by the voice of the unholy churchman, who, as the troops defiled before him, shouted exultingly; "Grasp your spears, beat your drums, and let us march without loss of time to glut our hate upon them, and to quench our thirst with their blood."

Under this sanguinary influence the Swiss made their attack upon Buffaloro, where, as we have already shown, they failed in their object; and thence marched from Monza towards Milan, plundering alike friends and foes, quarrelling among themselves, and spreading desolation upon their path.

The impatient spirit of Bayard chafed at the insolence of the ill-governed mercenaries, who were thus impeding the progress of the French arms; and aware that they were weakened by internal divisions, and that

the opportunity was not one to be neglected, he wrote to the king, who was then at Lyons, to solicit his permission to attack them with that portion of the army which was then upon the spot, and which he declared to be sufficient to ensure success. Francis, however, would not listen to the suggestion, but gave stringent orders that no engagement should be hazarded until the whole of the troops could be brought into the field. He however hastened his own departure from France, and proceeded with all speed to Turin, where he was warmly greeted by his uncle, Charles III, Duke of Savoy, that wavering prince, who had ever a ready reception for every successful sovereign. Several strong places were taken on his way without an effort at defence; and many a bronzed cheek flushed as the keys of Novara were delivered up. At this point he was joined by the Duke de Gueldres, the ever faithful and loyal servant of France, with six thousand lansquenets; and while the Swiss entered Milan with their whole army, amounting to a force of thirty-five thousand men, Francis established his head quarters at Marignano, a small village about two leagues from the city gates, pushing his vanguard to San-Donato and Santa Brigitta, which diminished the distance between the hostile troops about one-half.

To prevent any junction between the Swiss and the papal and Spanish armies, was now an object of the utmost importance; and accident effected for the young king what must otherwise have been hopeless. The Spaniards had made prisoner a confidential messenger of the pope, and affecting not to credit the account which he gave of his character and mission, they took posses-

sion of his despatches, and discovered from their contents that not only was Leo in treaty with Francis, but that his nephew had also addressed to him a letter of compliment and congratulation. This discovery naturally created a mutual jealousy and distrust, and Cardona refused to pass the Po unless the papal general were in his company; a resolution which, by the delays which it produced, prevented any co-operation with the Swiss, and moreover gave D'Alviano time to reach Lodi, ten miles further forward, with a large body of mounted troops; while Cardona himself, with the papal and Spanish armies, was at Placenza, beyond the Po, twenty miles further off in the rear of the French forces.

Indignant at the sordid treachery of the Swiss, Francis was now as eager to attack them, as he had previously been to conciliate; while the Cardinal of Sion was equally desirous that they should meet the enemy single-handed, without either papal or Spanish interference; a suggestion which aroused alike the vanity and the enthusiasm of the excited mountaineers, who had begun to esteem themselves invincible. From an elevated spot he harangued the restless host, calling upon them to do themselves justice, to remember their late successes, and the pledge which they had given to restore the young Duke of Milan to his lawful rights. He reminded them how much and how often they had themselves contributed to the glory of the French arms; and bade them recollect that in return for their services France had broken her treaties, violated her most solemn pledges, and insulted them in their honour, by opposing to them the lansquenets of Germany, who now sought to arrogate to

themselves a fame which the Swiss had purchased with their blood in many a well-fought field. He spoke with contempt of the superior force to which they would be opposed, declaring that the remembrance of Novara should be sufficient to render such a consideration idle; and he terminated his impassioned address by calling their attention to the fact that should they conquer, not only all the glory, but all the spoil would be their own; an argument which revealed how perfectly he was master of the art of eloquence.

A wild shout of applause welcomed his words; but, ere he could resume his speech, the young Marquis de Fleuranges, who had approached the city gates to reconnoitre with more boldness than caution, was seen and recognised by Mutio Colonna, who instantly gave the alarm; the Swiss flew to arms, and on Thursday the 13th of September, at three o'clock in the afternoon, they marched out of Milan, still under the excitement of the words to which they had been listening, and burning with the thirst of gold and hatred, advanced to Marignano to attack the enemy. Disdaining to delay the moment of their charge by any precautionary measure, they moved forward in a compact body along the direct road, flanked on either side by a deep ditch; and the fire of the artillery which was turned upon them, produced no other effect on their order of march, than to cause them to draw their ranks closer, and to fill up with celerity and steadiness the gaps which were made from time to time in their column; and ere the twilight fell they had overthrown the first body of lansquenets, who had been entrusted by the Connétable de Bourbon with the guard of the guns.

The king was conversing with D'Alviano, previously to seating himself at table, when Fleuranges galloped into the camp with information from M. de Bourbon that the Swiss were approaching. All was immediately in movement; and while Francis assumed his arms, he urged D'Alviano to join him with all speed with the Venetian army; and this done, he sprang into the saddle, and hastened towards the enemy, followed by his body-guard; while D'Alviano hurried back to Lodi, to bring up such troops as he could collect upon the instant.

History scarcely affords an example of a battle disputed with greater obstinacy than that of Marignano. The Swiss, intoxicated with vanity, hate, and greed, fought as though all their renown as soldiers were to be staked upon this one die; while Francis was surrounded by able and experienced generals, and although ignorant of the art of war, was full of intrepidity and courage. When the young king reached the field, the action had, as we have stated above, already commenced; and although the connétable had taken every precaution to strengthen his position, the serried attack of the enemy placed the French troops at a disadvantage, from the impracticability of their acting simultaneously. A large ditch had been dug to protect the guns, which were flanked by the cavalry; but although a murderous fire continued to be turned upon them, the mountaineers did not swerve or hesitate for an instant. On they moved in silence, darkening the causeway with their numbers, filling up the places of their dead, and marching straight upon the guns. Not even the appearance of the cavalry, destitute as they were of such a force, appeared to startle them;

but still they pressed forward, concentrating all their efforts against their detested rivals, the lansquenets, and apparently regardless of the mounted troops. This fact, unfortunately, aroused the suspicions of the Germans, who, perceiving that they were the sole objects of attack, began to apprehend treachery; and as this fatal idea gained ground, they wavered and gave way, ultimately retreating in disorder behind the ditch, where the Swiss followed them so closely as to gain possession of four of the guns.

The rapid eye of the connétable detected the truth at a glance; and, resolved to convince his startled allies of the fallacy of their suspicion, he caused the cavalry to attack the flank of the Swiss column; which they did with considerable effect, although from the nature of the ground they were unable to manœuvre, and could only advance by five hundred at a time. Meanwhile Francis himself advanced at the head of the Black Bands,[1] and made a vigorous attack upon the opposite flank; when the lansquenets, at once convinced of their error, attempted to regain the advantage they had lost, and, after a desperate struggle, succeeded in driving the enemy beyond the ditch, and once more turning the guns against them. The dauntless courage of the young monarch, who fought on foot, pike in hand, like the force which he led, animated the enthusiasm of the troops, and, for a moment, shook the arrogant tranquillity of the Swiss; but nevertheless, nothing important had been accomplished. Still the very sky seemed to bristle with their

[1] These were the forces contributed by the Duke de Gueldres, who, during the long wars of their sovereign against the emperor, having always fought under a black banner, had acquired this appellation.

long pikes, and their ranks were as dense as at the commencement of the action. In vain did the connétable and his generals exert the most desperate valour; in vain did the panting horses press closely upon the foremost files, while their riders endeavoured to cut their way through the thick-clinging mass; again and again they returned to the charge, only to be foiled; and at length, exhausted by their unsuccessful efforts, they were compelled to fall back in some disorder upon the infantry; when the king suddenly charged one of the Swiss wings, consisting of four thousand men, with two hundred gendarmes, so opportunely and so vigorously, that the division was completely routed, and with a cry of "France! France!" laid down their arms.

The similarity of uniform that existed between the two armies, each of which bore the white cross, was a serious disadvantage to the French, as amid the clouds of dust raised by the horses and artillery, and the deepening twilight, it was difficult for them to distinguish friends from enemies,—a circumstance which had nearly led to the capture of the young king; who, while at the head of his gendarmes, imagined that he was approaching a body of lansquenets, and galloped towards them shouting his rallying cry; when instantly a score of pikes were levelled at him, and he was compelled to make a hasty retreat with his squadron. The Swiss, on the other hand, having no cavalry of their own, could direct their weapons fearlessly against the mounted force, nor did they fail to profit by such an opportunity whenever it occurred; but still, conscious that they were indebted to the same manœuvre for their

success at Novara, they made every other object subservient to the capture of the artillery, and were never for an instant diverted from their purpose.

As the moon rose, less difficulty was experienced by the French, who were once more enabled to distinguish friends from foes; and Francis having rallied a body of lansquenets, joined the French infantry, led by the connétable, and succeeded in driving back the battalion which was marching upon the guns. This was the most fearful moment of the battle; the two armies became intermixed, the ditches were filled with dead, and no longer offered an impediment to the passage of either party; La Trémouille, who yet writhed at the remembrance of Novara, and his son, the Prince de Talmont, who was equally anxious to avenge the honour of the French arms, remained throughout the whole conflict upon this one spot, feeling that here, and only here, would the fortunes of the fight be decided; while Bayard, who was close beside them, having had his own war-horse killed under him, mounted a second just previously to the last charge; and more intent upon the enemy than his own safety, suffered the bridle to escape from his hand; when the spirited animal, excited by the clashing of weapons and the shrill battle-cries which resounded on every side, no sooner found itself freed from restraint, than it galloped madly towards the Swiss lines, broke through the foremost ranks, and would inevitably have carried its rider into the very thick of the enemy's forces, had not its feet become entangled in some trailing vines, which checked its headlong career. The position of the good knight was perilous, but not for a moment losing his presence of mind, he threw

himself from the saddle, cast off his helmet and tasses, and crept along one of the ditches on his hands and knees, until the shouts of "France! France!" which pealed out close beside him, gave him assurance that he had reached the French lines.

The Duke de Lorraine, by whom he was immediately recognised, supplied him with a third horse, and he obtained another helmet from a comrade in the field. Little more, however, could for the present be accomplished. Before midnight the moon went down, and darkness compelled both hosts to pause in a confusion which promised them ample work for the morrow. The two armies were completely entangled; several batteries had been taken; and one Swiss battalion was so close upon the artillery, beside which the king had taken up his post, that it was found necessary to extinguish the matches in order that the enemy might not discover how slenderly he was attended. No signal of retreat having been sounded by either party, the confusion was complete, each corps or detachment being compelled to make its bivouac where it had been surprised by the darkness; and thus friends and enemies, the living and the dead, lay side by side, sharing one common couch, until the daylight should once more call the survivors to recommence their struggle. The young king spent the remainder of the night stretched on a gun-carriage, completely armed, where he snatched a few intervals of broken rest; and having complained of thirst, and demanded a draught of water, it was brought to him in a helmet, but so discoloured with blood, that, exhausted as he was, he put it from him with loathing.

The hours of seeming rest were not, however, suffered by the French leaders to pass in total inaction. An Italian trumpeter, who was stationed near the person of the king, and the sounds of whose brazen instrument at intervals broke upon the stillness of that field of blood like the trump of the archangel, rousing the dying and awakening the requiem of the dead, gave out signals to the different French regiments, who one by one approached the royal person; and thus, when the day broke, Francis found himself once more surrounded by a force of twenty thousand lansquenets, and all his horse; while at the same time the horns of the mountaineers were heard as if in response or defiance, although no corresponding movement took place among their forces.

At break of day the Swiss renewed the attack, the artillery was impetuously assaulted, and the Germans who defended it were driven back; but the present disposition of the French army enabled it to withstand this first shock without any apparent discomfiture; and the well-directed fire of the guns opened a passage for the cavalry through the hostile ranks, and turned the tide in favour of the assailed. The Swiss soon became aware that they could not successfully contend against the enemy upon this point; and accordingly detached a strong force to attack the French in the rear; but in this attempt they were also destined to be foiled; as the troops of the Duke d'Alençon, which had hitherto taken no part in the conflict, and the cross-bowmen of De Prie, having discovered the manœuvre, charged them with vigour, and totally routed the whole body.

It soon became evident that the star of Francis was in

the ascendant; the Swiss began to give way, but slowly, reluctantly, and with unbroken ranks, contending for every inch of ground with a tenacity which was heroic; but at length they abandoned all hope and retreated undisguisedly, although still with their faces turned towards their enemies. When the victory was complete the young king called a council to decide upon the expediency of pursuit, but the project was ultimately abandoned; even Bayard, ever the foremost where glory was to be won, declaring that the day might yet come when the co-operation of the Swiss would be valuable to France; and the most adventurous remembering that the number and rank of their own wounded demanded their first attention. The fugitives were consequently permitted to re-enter Milan without opposition, where they passed the remnant of the eventful day which had witnessed their defeat; and at dawn the following morning marched out in mortified silence on their way towards their own mountains.

D'Alviano, who, by forced marches, had reached Marignano with some Venetian cavalry, only arrived in time to attack the Swiss upon their homeward path; but the exertion which he had undergone proved, nevertheless, fatal to his shattered constitution, and soon brought him to his grave. The Swiss had suffered enormous loss, computed at from twelve to fifteen thousand men; nor had the French, conquerors though they were, unalloyed cause for rejoicing. They also had paid a heavy price for their victory. Six thousand of their troops had fallen, and among them were some of the most chivalrous blood of the nation: François de Bourbon had been killed by

his brother's side; the brave young Prince de Talmond, who had so nobly supported his father, was struck down before his eyes; Pierre de Gouffier Boisy, the gallant D'Imbercourt, the Count de Sancerre, the Sire de Mouy, Bussy, the nephew of the Cardinal d'Amboise, La Meilleraye, the king's standard bearer, De Roye, and the young Count de Petigliano, were all among the slain; while the list of wounded was even more appalling; and Bourbon owed his life to the intrepidity of a squadron of his own cavalry. Even Francis himself, as we have already shown, barely escaped capture; while, true to his knightly tenets, he had exposed his person throughout the whole conflict so unsparingly that he was on more than one occasion in imminent peril, and had a portion of his dress transfixed by the blow of a pike.

The letter addressed by the young monarch to his mother immediately after the battle, is highly characteristic alike of his personal courage, and his total want of power to understand, even at its close, by what precise strategy the victory had been secured to his own arms. "Because the avenue;" he says; "by which the said Swiss were approaching was rather narrow, it was not so possible to place our gendarmes in the vanguard, as though we had been in the open country, which threatened to throw us into great disorder. . . . And however well and gallantly these men-at-arms charged, the Connétable, the Maréchal de Chabannes, Imbercourt, Téligny, Pont-Remy, and others who were there, they were thrown back upon their foot-soldiers, so that, owing to the great dust, they could scarcely see each other, especially as the night was coming on, and there was some slight con-

fusion; but God did me the favour to guide me to the side of those who were pushing them so hotly; I thought it well to charge them, and so they were, and I promise you, *Madame*, however well led and brave they were, our two hundred gendarmes overcame four thousand Swiss, and routed them rudely enough, making them throw down their pikes, and cry *France!* . . . And you must understand that the conflict of that night lasted from three o'clock in the afternoon until between eleven and twelve, when the moon failed us. And I assure you, *Madame*, that I saw the lansquenets measure pikes with the Swiss, the lances with the gendarmes; and it can no longer be said that the gendarmes are mounted hares, for, without fail, it was they who did the business; and I do not believe that I lie when I say that by five hundred and five hundred at a time, thirty fine charges were made before the battle was won."

The entire letter is long, often playful, and occasionally even flippant, when the gravity of the subject is considered; but Francis was still young, greedy of renown, and, consequently, almost careless of the means and price at which it was acquired; while the generosity of his character is apparent in the fact that he speaks of his own exploits as though they were mere matters of course, while he withholds no praise from those by whom he was surrounded.

On the Friday evening, the same upon which this letter was written, the whole camp was loud with rejoicing, and the bearing of each separate leader was warmly discussed; when it was generally admitted that Bayard was the hero of the two days, as he had ever

been in the field of honour; and Francis himself was so fully impressed with the same conviction, that before the night set in, he resolved, previously to creating knights with his own hand, to receive knighthood himself at that of Bayard: the romantic tastes in which he loved to indulge having caused him to overlook the fact that every monarch of France was necessarily understood to be a knight even from the cradle.

Nevertheless the ceremony must have been an imposing one, as the young king stood upon the battle-field where he had subdued his enemies, in the midst of the brave and devoted chivalry of a great nation; the dead, who had fallen in his cause, yet unearthed; the living who had fought beside him, still at their post; the gallant men who survived the conflict marshalled about him, girding with their strength the proud group clustered about their youthful, and fearless, and victorious sovereign; the banners of their beloved France streaming upon the air, and the weapons which had so well and so recently done their duty gleaming on all sides; feathers streaming, proud war-horses champing the bit, and the artillery-men leaning upon their guns, now dark and silent.

Mistaken as the act may have been, and worse than supererogatory in a powerful monarch, the scene must, nevertheless, have been one to make high hearts leap, and bold brows flush, as Francis called Bayard to his side, and with the noble and endearing courtesy familiar to him, declared his intention of being there and then knighted, by the hand of a warrior esteemed one of the most renowned, not only of his own nation, but of all Christendom; and, despite the dis-

claimers of his astonished subject, he persisted in his determination.

"In good sooth, Sire;" then exclaimed Bayard, who would have held further objections to the command of his sovereign as discourteous and irreverent; "since it is your royal pleasure that this should be, I am ready to perform your will, not once, but many times, unworthy as I am of the high office to which you have appointed me;" and grasping his sword proudly and firmly, he continued, as the young king bent his knee; "May my poor agency be as efficacious as though the ceremony were performed by Oliver, Godfrey, or Baldwin; although, in good truth, you are the first prince whom I have ever dubbed a knight; and God grant that you may never turn your back upon an enemy." Then brandishing his good weapon, and glancing sportively at it, as the last rays of evening flashed upon its polished blade, he apostrophized it as though it were a thing of life, which could participate in his own hilarity of spirit, exclaiming; "Thou art fortunate indeed to-day that thou hast been called upon to confer knighthood upon so great and powerful a monarch; and certes, my trusty sword, thou shalt henceforth be carefully guarded as a relic, honoured above all others; and shalt never be unsheathed again, save it be against the Infidel!" Then, lowering the point with reverence, he thrust it back into its scabbard, amid the enthusiastic shouts of the excited army.

Many of the French officers, among whom one of the most distinguished was the gallant young Marquis de Fleuranges, then received the honour of knighthood in

their turn by the hand of Francis himself; and three days having been consumed in these ceremonies, and in the burial of those who had fallen upon that memorable field, the French struck their tents, and marched towards Milan.

The Cardinal of Sion had already taken refuge in the coveted city, trusting still to retrieve the disasters of Marignano; but he was soon undeceived by the bearing of the fugitives, who poured through the gates after their defeat. So far from acknowledging his authority, the mortified Swiss bitterly reproached him with the result of his pernicious counsels, upbraiding him with the blood which had been spilt, and the disgrace of which he had been the author; and so fierce was their resentment, that he was wholly indebted to the sacredness of his character for his escape from the vengeance of the infuriated troops, who saw all their previous glory and power annihilated by their present overthrow. Nor did he long venture to trust even to this safeguard; for, having convinced himself that his influence was at an end, he found it expedient to escape by stealth from the city, carefully carrying with him, however, the young Francesco Sforza, the brother of the reigning duke, upon whom he looked as the earnest of future dissension.

Milan gladly opened its gates to the conquerors, for the terror which the battle of Marignano had inspired forbade any further effort at resistance on the part of its citizens; but the citadel into which Maximilian Sforza had retired still held out. Although by the late defeat of his mercenary allies he was rendered almost powerless, the duke had been encouraged to defy his enemies to the last

extremity, by the fact that ere they vacated the city the Swiss had encouraged him to defend the fortress, declaring that they would shortly return in increased force to effect his deliverance. Unfortunately, however, the promise was accompanied by a demand of their arrears of pay, which Maximilian, who in losing his duchy had lost all, was no longer in a position to satisfy; and thus, with a display of magnanimity at the outset, they were finally enabled to secure what they had become anxious to obtain—a plausible pretext for abandoning the weak prince to his fate.

Dissensions had, moreover, broken out among the Italian subjects of the duke, and the small force of Swiss who had determined to share his fortunes; and thus besieged from without, and weakened by jealousies and differences within, the citadel with its slender garrison of two thousand men was unable to withstand the ardour of the French led on by the Duke de Bourbon; and it accordingly surrendered, twenty days after the battle of Marignano, together with the city of Cremona; the only portion of Sforza's territories which were not already in the possession of the French king.

Francis proved himself, however, a generous conqueror; conceded honourable conditions to the conquered; suffered the entire garrison to evacuate the citadel without molestation; and offered to Sforza himself a safe asylum in France, with a pension of thirty thousand crowns. Destitute alike of talent and ambition, Maximilian eagerly embraced these terms; and gladly retired from a position to which he was unequal, and to which he would in all probability never have aspired, had he

not listened to the advice of pretended friends whose interests were served by his advancement, rather than to the promptings of his own inclination. He accordingly renounced his ducal rights in favour of the French king, passed into France, and, after lingering through fifteen years of insignificance, ultimately died in Paris, on the 10th of June, 1530.

Francis was now master of the whole of the Milanese; and a few days subsequent to the completion of the treaty, made his ceremonious entry into the captured city at the head of his army, attended by five princes of the blood, when the oath of allegiance was once more taken by the authorities as readily and as glibly as though it had not already been pledged and violated on many previous occasions; congratulations, equally unmeaning, poured in from all sides; and the young king saw himself at last sovereign of Milan.

CHAPTER VIII.

[1515-17.]

LEO X. PROPOSES A TREATY WITH FRANCE, WHICH IS RATIFIED AT VITERBO —HIS TERGIVERSATION—FRANCIS PROCEEDS TO BOLOGNA TO MEET THE POPE—POLICY OF THE PONTIFF—A LEAGUE IS FORMED BETWEEN THE TWO POTENTATES—FRANCIS AGREES TO ABANDON HIS DESIGNS ON NAPLES—THE QUESTION OF THE PRAGMATIC SANCTION IS DISCUSSED—DISCONTENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PARIS—LEO X. ENDEAVOURS TO INDUCE FRANCIS TO UNDERTAKE A CRUSADE AGAINST THE TURKS—THE CONCORDAT IS SIGNED —EXULTATION OF THE FRENCH PEOPLE—FERDINAND OF ARAGON ENDEAVOURS TO AROUSE THE JEALOUSY OF HENRY VIII. AGAINST FRANCE—THE EMPEROR RAISES A POWERFUL ARMY—LAUTREC BESIEGES BRESCIA; BUT IS REPULSED; AND COMPELLED TO RETIRE TO MILAN—THE DUKE DE BOURBON DESTROYS THE FAUBOURGS OF THE CITY, AND DISBANDS THE SWISS TROOPS —THE EMPEROR THREATENS TO RAZE THE CITY OF MILAN—THE SWISS REFUSE TO ACT—MAXIMILIAN ESCAPES BY NIGHT FROM THE CAMP—THE SIEGE OF MILAN IS RAISED—THE SWISS TROOPS ARE RECALLED BY THE DIET—THE IMPERIALISTS EVACUATE THE MILANESE—DISGRACE OF MAXIMILIAN—BRESCIA CAPITULATES—DEATH OF FERDINAND OF ARAGON—HE BEQUEATHS HIS KINGDOM TO THE ARCHDUKE CHARLES—FRANCIS ISSUES SEVERAL EDICTS WHICH ARE UNFAVOURABLY RECEIVED BY HIS SUBJECTS —ARROGANCE OF THE CHANCELLOR—EDUCATION OF CHARLES OF ARAGON —HIS PROSPECTS—HE ENDEAVOURS TO CONCILIATE FRANCIS—JEALOUSY OF M. DE CHIÈVRES AGAINST THE CARDINAL XIMENES—CHARLES SENDS AN AMBASSADOR TO FRANCE—THE TWO MONARCHS ENTER INTO A TREATY OF ALLIANCE—THE HAND OF THE INFANT PRINCESS LOUISE PROMISED TO THE SPANISH KING—THE PEACE OF NOYON—MAXIMILIAN ACCEDES TO THE TREATY—STATE OF THE VENETIAN TERRITORIES—FRANCIS OPENS A NEGOTIATION WITH THE HELVETIC STATES, AND CONCLUDES A TREATY OF AMITY WITH SWITZERLAND.

CHAPTER VIII.

[1515-17.]

Leo X, versed in all the refinements of Italian policy, abandoned with their success the cause of his allies; and as the victory of Marignano had secured the ascendency of Francis in Italy, he lost no time in seeking to obtain his friendship. A nuncio was despatched immediately that the result of the battle became known, ostensibly to congratulate the French monarch, but the real object of whose mission was to propose a treaty, by which the sovereign pontiff volunteered to relinquish his pretensions to Parma and Piacenza, and to withdraw the papal troops which were serving under the emperor; on condition that, as a compensation for these territories, Bologna should be ceded to him, as well as a monopoly of the commerce in salt from Cervia.

To this proposition Francis acceded, and the treaty was ratified at Viterbo, on the 13th of October. The two forfeited cities opened their gates, the garrisons marched out, and they were left at the disposal of the French. In the second clause of the treaty Leo was, however, less honest; for instead of recalling the troops who were serving under the standard of Maximilian, he simply disbanded them; thus leaving each individual free to re-engage himself in the same army; while he

acted with the same prudent reserve when proposing to Francis that ere he left Italy they should meet and confer together upon such subjects as might concern their mutual interests. Having once given his assent to this arrangement, the young king prepared to proceed to Rome; but the wily pope had already imbibed a suspicion that the conqueror of Marignano had designs against Naples; and, resolved not to smooth his path towards this new object of ambition, he affected to deprecate the idea of his undergoing the inconvenience and fatigue which such a journey must involve, and suggested Bologna as the more desirable point of meeting.

Thither, therefore, Francis repaired brilliantly attended, and was met on the confines of the ecclesiastical states by a body of thirty cardinals, who welcomed him with every demonstration of respect and regard; and by whom he was at once conducted to the consistory in great state, in order that he might without loss of time, pay that spiritual homage to the pontiff which was enforced from every Christian monarch by whom he was approached. The French king entered the church supported by two cardinal-bishops, and followed by his chancellor and barons, habited in vests and haut-de-chausses of cloth of gold; himself holding the train of the pope's robe until he approached the altar, when he took his seat upon a low stool beside him, rising and kneeling with the assembled cardinals. When the pontiff communicated, the king presented the water and napkin with which he washed his hands; while the former was warned not to raise his hand to his cap, as he was in the habit of doing upon such occasions,

lest the action should be observed, and construed into an intentional courtesy towards his royal assistant, which it would be indecorous in the vicar of Christ to exhibit in public towards any temporal monarch.

The great ambition of Francis having been for some time a reconciliation with the sovereign-pontiff, he was at once fascinated by the urbane bearing and specious sophistry of his host, who, although he had nearly reached his fortieth year, possessed all the tastes and habits of a younger man; and enamoured rather of military glory than ecclesiastical probity, spent his life in dreams of conquest, and a round of pleasure and dissipation. Having by his reckless extravagance exhausted the immense treasures accumulated by his predecessor, Leo X. was desirous of subjecting additional provinces to the authority of the Holy See, in order that he might be enabled to levy new tributes; and he accordingly felt it expedient to conciliate his most dangerous rival in this game of warfare, by every means in his power.

Nothing could exceed the brilliancy of the festivals given in honour of the young conqueror. The streets through which he passed were draped with silks and tapestry, and strewn with leaves and flowers; while, equally devoted to splendour and pleasure, the two potentates passed several days in the most magnificent dissipation, before they proceeded to the more serious business which had induced the meeting.

These days were not however lost to the crafty Leo; who, sufficiently skilled in physiognomy to discern at a glance the principal failing of his princely guest, assailed him by an excess of flattery which he was consti-

tutionally unable to withstand; and, this point gained, induced him to purchase his reconciliation with the church, by conditions which were degrading alike to a sovereign and a conqueror.

While the two contracting parties formed a league of strict alliance, not only between themselves personally, but also between their separate states, Francis, in addition, conceded his guarantee of protection to all the ecclesiastical possessions; and pledged himself not only to assist the pope to recover all the properties of the church to which he could advance a valid right, but even to place implicit trust in the word of the pontiff, whenever these claims might be disputed. He likewise promised not to receive under his protection any vassal, feudatory, or churchman of his holy ally, who might have rendered, or should hereafter render himself obnoxious to his spiritual sovereign; and to withdraw his favour from all such as he should have already provided with an asylum in France. He assured to the pope, as we have stated above, the commerce in salt, which, in point of fact, secured to him a monopoly of the whole trade in that essential article throughout the Milanese; and promised to the Florentine republic, or, in other words, to the house of Medicis, by whom it was governed, the same guarantees as to the church itself; and he especially pledged himself to support the power of Giuliano and Lorenzo de' Medici, the former of whom had been constantly associated in all public measures of the pontiff, and to grant to them titles of honour in France, and large pensions.

Meanwhile, in return for all these important con-

cessions, Leo did no more than promise to support the king in his sovereignty of the duchy of Milan, such as he then held it; and to restore the cities of Parma and Piacenza, which he had himself detached from that province.

Three days were consumed in this unequal, and, to Francis, unfavourable conference; during the course of which the Italian pontiff succeeded, moreover, in inducing him to abandon all present designs upon Naples; representing to him that the health of Ferdinand was becoming sufficiently precarious to justify the anticipation of his early demise, at which period he should himself be freed from his engagements towards that monarch, and at liberty to assist the views of France. Anxious to retain the newly acquired friendship of the pope, Francis was induced to comply with this request also, although not altogether unconditionally. He could not overlook the fact that the Duke of Ferrara, who was a feudatory of the Holy See, had forfeited, through his fidelity to his own cause, the territories of Modena and Reggio; or that the Duke d'Urbino, a kinsman of the previous pope, had been deprived of the estates which he held of the see of Rome, for having fought throughout the recent war under the French banner; and he accordingly stipulated that the former should be reinstated in his possessions, and the domains of the latter restored to him.

The first proposition was, after some difficulty, accepted by Leo X; but even then only upon the condition that he should personally be reimbursed in certain sums which he declared that the defalcation of the duke had caused him to expend; to the latter he merely

replied that he would give all necessary consideration to the subject; and with this equivocal answer Francis suffered himself to be satisfied.

The question of the Pragmatic Sanction, involving as it did more serious and important consequences, was deputed to the investigation and discussion of commissioners, who were empowered to examine and to decide upon the conflicting interests which must be affected by its arrangement. This was ultimately accomplished by a mutual concession, and the terms being carefully arranged and specified, the treaty received the name of *Concordat;* the pope granting to the French king the privilege of nominating to all the vacant benefices in his kingdom; and Francis, on his side, engaging to pay to the pontiff the year's revenue of benefices so bestowed.

The university of Paris, however, saw with a jealous eye the project of an arrangement which annihilated the freedom of ecclesiastical elections; and refused either to register, or to recognise, the right of the monarch thus to limit the powers of the Gallican church, and to divert its revenues; accusing him of having bartered its unalienable rights in order to further his personal interests. Having, by an assembly at Bourges in 1438, liberated themselves in a great degree from all interference with the internal economy of their church on the part of the pope, and released themselves from his exactions, the French clergy were naturally averse to feel the yoke of papal despotism once more upon their necks; and thus this, one of the most unpopular measures of Francis, became at once a source of heart-burning and suspicion.

The next attempt of the wily pontiff was to induce the young sovereign to undertake a crusade against the Turks; a project which he considered as eminently suited at once to excite the ardent and chivalrous nature of Francis, and to deliver himself for a time from a dangerous neighbour; while in order the more to please his fancy and to arouse his ambition in favour of such an expedition, he proposed to bestow upon him the title of Emperor of the East. Francis accepted the courtesy, but regarded the whole transaction as nothing more; declining to assume a dignity which he was conscious that his host had no power to confer; and confining his ambition to other and more feasible enterprises. Nor were the two high contracting parties the only ones who were, at this important crisis, occupied in the furtherance of their individual interests at Bologna. All who directly, or indirectly, assisted in the negotiations put forth their several claims; money, pensions, honours, and ecclesiastical benefices, were lavishly distributed among the adherents of the pope. The hand of Philiberte de Savoie, the sister of Madame d'Angoulême, but two-and-twenty years her junior, was promised to Giuliano de' Medici, with the duchy of Nemours as her dowry; while Adrian de Boissy, the brother of the grand-master, received a cardinal's hat.

Altogether the negotiations became ere their close so lengthy and complicated, that the *Concordat*, by which they were finally terminated, was not signed until the 18th of August, 1516.

The conquest of Milan assured, and that of Naples suspended for a time, Francis proceeded to disband his army,

retaining only seven hundred lances, six thousand lansquenets, and four thousand Basques, whom he placed under the command of the Connétable de Bourbon, as his lieutenant-general in the Milanese, for the protection of that duchy; and he then departed for France, where he arrived in February 1516, and was welcomed at Lyons by the queen, and the duchess his mother, surrounded by a brilliant court, composed of all that was fairest and noblest in his dominions.

The whole kingdom rang with acclamations. All was for the moment at peace both within and without; and although clouds might lower upon the political horizon, they had not yet burst. The Swiss had been pacified, if not thoroughly conciliated, by the payment of their claims; the Venetians, with the assistance of Lautrec and his little army, were still occupied in endeavouring to repossess themselves of their former territories; but Francis soon became aware that Ferdinand, alarmed at his success, had, (feeble and failing as he was,) endeavoured, with a view of distracting his attention from Naples, to excite against him the jealousy of Henry VIII; and had already succeeded in forming a cabal at the English court, with the assistance of Wolsey, in which the French monarch was accused of a secret enmity towards England; an intrigue which had already attained to a height that threatened an approaching war between the two powers. This evil was, however, averted, through the sound judgment and good policy of the English council; but Henry had been sufficiently prejudiced by the representations that were made to him, to furnish the emperor secretly with a considerable sum of

money, in order to assist him in a new attempt to recover the Milanese, and to place Francesco Sforza, the brother of Maximilian, upon the ducal throne.

The subsidies which he had recently received from both Henry VIII. and Ferdinand, and which he had not yet dissipated, enabled the emperor to raise a formidable army of sixteen thousand German cavalry, fifteen thousand Swiss, and ten thousand Spanish foot-soldiers. The French troops, under Lautrec, were at that period (March, 1516) besieging Brescia, in conjunction with the Venetians, and considered themselves secure of taking the city, the garrison having determined to surrender in thirty days, should they not receive succour from without. Before that time had elapsed, however, a force of six thousand Germans succeeded in introducing themselves into the fortress; while the emperor appeared in the field at the head of his army; and the besiegers found themselves compelled to retreat, first beyond the Mincio, and subsequently to abandon not only that river, but also those of the Oglio and Adda; and to shut themselves up in Milan, which the Duke de Bourbon hastily fortified as well as circumstances would permit, destroying for that purpose the extensive and populous faubourgs.

Fortunately for the French, Maximilian did not pursue his advantage with the promptitude which would have ensured his ultimate success; and time was accordingly secured for the arrival of a reinforcement of thirteen thousand Swiss, raised by Albert de la Pierre in the eight cantons which had accepted the peace proffered by Francis I. the preceding year, as well as of a considerable body of troops from France. The former, however, were

not destined to prove serviceable to Bourbon, the influence of the Bishop of Sion, who was in the enemy's camp, being once more exerted to separate them from the cause of France; in which he so far succeeded as to induce them to declare that they would not take the field against their own countrymen. In vain did the duke expostulate; they remained firm in their determinations, and he at length indignantly disbanded the whole force, with the exception of the company commanded by Albert de la Pierre, which also stipulated that it should only be employed against the Germans, and the army of mercenaries marched out of the garrison; an event which greatly rejoiced the emperor, who now conceived the success of his enterprise secure; and sat down before Milan, declaring that he would raze the city to the earth, and strew its site with salt, unless it instantly capitulated.

This threat was, however, disregarded by the French general, and the siege proceeded; but unfortunately for Maximilian, the Genoese bankers to whom Henry VIII. had confided the sum promised to the emperor, having failed before it was transmitted, he found himself unable to fulfil his engagements with his mercenary allies, who began to murmur, and to demand the immediate payment of their stipends. Maximilian strove to pacify them by promises, but they had already experienced the fallacy of similar pledges upon his part, and refused to listen to any compromise. He pointed to Milan, the plunder of which city would, as he anticipated, shortly enable him to pay up the arrears of his whole army; but the Swiss reminded him that the town was not yet taken; and, with the knowledge of his helplessness, their insolence

soon exceeded all bounds, and they threatened, should he not satisfy their claims upon the instant, to offer themselves in a body to the Connétable de Bourbon, by whom they should be paid for their services. In this strait Maximilian found himself compelled to send sixteen thousand crowns to their leaders, by the Cardinal of Sion, desiring him to assure them that he would immediately proceed to Trent to obtain a further supply in order to liquidate all their claims; but this was no sooner done, than fearing he should in his turn be abandoned, or even delivered over to his enemies, as Ludovico Sforza had formerly been by these very troops, he left the camp in the night, accompanied only by two hundred horsemen; and escaped into Germany, leaving his army without a leader.

His flight was no sooner ascertained than the troops disbanded themselves; the siege of Milan was raised; and a few days subsequently the Swiss of both armies received an order from the diet immediately to return home, which they obeyed in their usual manner—plundering, as they went, every town and village which was not strong enough to venture upon resistance, and thus indemnifying themselves for the non-payment of their salary. About three thousand German and Spanish mercenaries joined the army of the Duke de Bourbon; while the confederated troops retired rapidly from the country, harassed in their retreat by the French, whom they left once more in undisputed possession of the Milanese; and Maximilian found himself in ignoble security, having forfeited the military reputation which he had acquired in his youth by a pusillanimity perhaps unequalled.

Brescia was once more besieged, and capitulated; but Verona still refused to admit the French troops, and as its means of defence were great, and the abilities of its military governor Antonio Colonna[1] well known, the siege promised to become interminable. At this particular period the death of Ferdinand of Aragon delivered France from her most formidable enemy, and removed from the path of Francis himself the only monarch whose long experience, subtil arts, and numerous resources, he had reason to apprehend.

Contrary to the previsions of all around him, who were aware of his jealousy of his grandson Charles, and equally at variance with his previous resolve, which had been to constitute the younger of the brothers heir to the crown, only on the day which preceded his death Ferdinand had executed a new will, by which he bequeathed his kingdom to the elder; an act of justice which had been reluctantly wrung from him even at the eleventh hour by his most faithful counsellors, who had induced him thus to gainsay his own wishes by representing that as Charles was already heir-apparent to the throne of Austria, the union of that kingdom with the crown of Spain would tend to weaken the power of France; a consideration which absorbed all others. Thus, the accession of the Archduke Charles united under one sovereign the Netherlands and Franche-Comté, the kingdoms of Castile, Aragon, and Naples, with the newly discovered treasures of the western world; but that sovereign had as

[1] Marco-Antonio Colonna distinguished himself greatly in the wars of Italy against the French, to which cause he was, however, subsequently won over by Francis I. He was killed at the siege of Milan, in 1522, at the age of forty-nine years.

yet scarcely emerged from boyhood; his dominions lay distant and disjointed; the various people over whom he was called upon to rule, were unconnected by laws, by customs, and by language, and regarded each other with jealousy and distrust; while many of the states, attached to their ancient rights and privileges, and apprehensive of their subversion, were inimical to his interests, and considered Francis as their most natural ally. Nevertheless, the French king suffered the favourable moment to escape him; and even while he foresaw the gathering storm, neglected the measures by which it would probably have been averted; and, instead of attacking the infant power of his rival, permitted it peaceably to attain to maturity and strength, trusting to the delusive arts of negotiation to effect that which a wiser policy might have compelled.

Thus, while the evil gained ground apparently unappreciated, Francis, withdrawing his attention from subjects of more vital importance, turned it upon the internal organization of the kingdom; and profited by the momentary calm to issue several new ordinances, some of which were highly unpalatable to his subjects. His first edict, prompted by Duprat, had already awakened murmurs, which although ultimately silenced, were not altogether suppressed; but in March, 1516, he published a new ordinance at Lyons, purporting to protect the forest-rights of himself and his nobles, which roused the indignation of both parliament and people. The young king, says Isambert; "angered by the fact that many persons, not having the right of chase, do take certain brown and black animals, such as hares

pheasants, partridges, and other game, thus committing felony, and impeding and curtailing our pastime," fulminated the most severe threats against all poachers and unlicensed sportsmen; condemning them, according to the flagrancy of their crime, to fines, floggings, banishment under pain of the gibbet, confiscation of property, the galleys, and even death itself. He, moreover, inflicted severe punishment on those who within the limits of the royal forests, possessed arms suited either to war or sport; and, finally, he gave to all the princes of the blood, nobles, and proprietors of forest-lands or warrens throughout the kingdom, the right of maintaining the exclusive privilege of sporting upon their property, which was guaranteed to them by punishments equally severe against all intruders.

The parliament at once refused to register such an ordinance; and presented a remonstrance to the monarch, entreating him to mitigate the extreme stringency of this new edict, which must tend to exasperate such of his faithful subjects as not only paid the tax, but also supported all the burthen of the state. Its representations were, however, received with indifference and disregard; and the chancellor declared that the king was both indignant and surprised that the parliament should presume to oppose his will, when it must be aware that the sovereign alone had the right to regulate the administration of his kingdom. "Obey;" he concluded; "or the king will recognise in you only rebels, whom he will punish like the meanest of his subjects." The parliament nevertheless resisted during twelve months; but, at the termination of that period, the unrighteous ordinance was registered.

Charles had scarcely attained his sixteenth year when he succeeded to the Spanish crown; but, young as he was, the rigid training to which he had been subjected by the prudent foresight of his governor, M. de Chièvres, had long accustomed him to the transaction of public business and the duties of a monarch. Every despatch which arrived from the provinces, even during the course of the night, was immediately presented to him; and when he had informed himself of its contents, he personally communicated them to his council, where they were discussed in his presence. A remonstrance having been made to the Seigneur de Chièvres on this subject upon one occasion, by the French ambassador, who testified his surprise that he should inflict such an amount of tedious and frequently untimely labour upon a mere boy when he might so easily relieve him from it; the wise preceptor replied firmly: "Cousin, I am the tutor and guardian of his youth, and I wish that, when I die, he may be independent of all extraneous help; whereas, if he were unacquainted with public business, he must, after my decease, have a new guardian, from his ignorance of his own affairs."

Thus, even from his boyhood, Charles had acquired habits of thoughtfulness and foresight which gave him throughout his whole life a great advantage over the volatile and romantic Francis I, who seldom suffered more serious subjects to interfere with his personal gratification. The moment of his accession was, however, critical; he had to fear that Spain would persist in bestowing her dual crown upon his younger brother Ferdinand; who, unlike himself, had been entirely edu-

cated under the eye of the late king, and who had long been regarded as his destined successor. By the will so tardily destroyed the junior prince had been declared grand-master of the military orders of Spain, and endowed with revenues and power well constituted to render him an effective leader in any civil contention: and a cabal existed in Aragon in favour of his claims to the sovereignty which he had been led to expect; while even in Castile, doubts were expressed as to the right of Charles to assume the crown before the death of his mother, whose hopeless derangement nevertheless precluded her from ascending the throne.

At the decease of Ferdinand, Charles was in Flanders; and, although naturally desirous to take possession of his new dominions, he was detained by powerful obstacles in the Low Countries. The war in Italy was not yet terminated; and, with the crown of his grandfather, the young king inherited his love of enterprise and thirst for conquest; but he could not inspire the Flemish people with his military ardour; they shrank, on the contrary, from a prospect of hostilities with France which must tend to injure their commercial interests; and Charles was not in a position to enforce his views. He had, therefore, no alternative, save to seek the friendship and alliance of Francis, to which he was urged by the representations of M. de Chièvres, who impressed upon him the imperative necessity of conciliating his new subjects before he attempted any foreign aggression; the Cardinal Ximénès, Archbishop of Toledo,[1] who

[1] Don Francisco Ximénès was born at Torrelaguna, in Old Castile, in 1437, and studied at Alcala and Salamanca, where he after-

had, by the will of the late king, been appointed regent of the kingdom until the arrival of his grandson, having, despite his great age, rigorously commenced the discharge of his trust; and already began to interfere with the privileges of the nobles, and to enhance those of the citizens and municipalities. Moreover, M. de Chièvres was anxious to avoid, in so far as it might be practicable, any familiar intercourse between his royal pupil and the powerful prelate of whose influence he was apprehensive. Thus Charles, upon his accession, found himself surrounded by difficulties; and at once became aware that his wisest policy would be to conciliate the friendship of France, and thus secure an efficient ally in case of need, as well as a safe passage into Spain.

To effect this important object, Charles despatched the Sire de Ravenstein as his ambassador to the French

wards became a tutor of laws. He then obtained a canonry in the diocese of Siguenza, and subsequently the post of Grand-Vicar. Disgusted with the world, he first took the vows as a Cordelier in the convent of Toledo; but, still dissatisfied with the enforced contact with his fellow-men, he withdrew from the cloister to the solitude of Castanel. Isabella the Catholic, hearing the report of his talents and austerities, selected him as her confessor, and in 1495 presented him with the archbishopric of Toledo. Julius II. afterwards called him to the conclave, and Ferdinand in his turn confided to him the administration of public affairs. Ximénès then resolved to engage in an African war, and himself headed the troops, and took Oran in 1509. Ferdinand, when dying, appointed him, as we have shown, regent of the kingdom of Castile (1516). In this capacity he reduced to obedience the haughty nobility who refused to recognise Charles V. as their king; and, in order to humble them further, he permitted the citizens to bear arms, and accorded to them numerous privileges. He reformed and reorganized the governments of the towns, armies, and monasteries, and punished with great severity both theft and assassination. He died in 1517.

court, who on the part of his master requested Francis to appoint some convenient spot where the delegates of the two sovereigns might confer together, for the purpose of terminating any differences which existed either between themselves or their allies. The proposal was an acceptable one to the French king, who on his side was desirous to establish by a peace his recent conquests in Italy; and accordingly commissioners were appointed in the persons of Arthur Gouffier, Seigneur de Boissy, and Antoine de Croy, Seigneur de Chièvres, the ex-governors of the two young monarchs, while Noyon was selected as their place of meeting.

On the 1st of August they entered the city; and on the 13th of the same month a treaty of alliance between Charles and Francis was signed, by which they separately bound themselves to assist each other, not only in reciprocal defence, but also in the attainment of such conquests as they might legitimately attempt. The question still pending on the subject of Navarre was arranged by the pledge of M. de Chièvres that Charles should, so soon as he had secured peaceable possession of the Spanish crown, carefully investigate the claims of Henri d'Albret,[1] and render him ample justice; or that Francis should be left free to give him whatever assistance he might deem fitting. The pretensions of the French king to Naples, based upon the treaty of Ferdinand on his marriage with Germaine de Foix, were undeniable; and consequently engaged the more serious attention of the plenipotentiaries, by whom it was ultimately decided, that

[1] Henri d'Albret II, King of Navarre, and Count de Foix. He died in 1555.

in order to reconcile the interests of the two sovereigns, Charles should pledge himself to espouse the infant princess Louise, the daughter of Francis, then about twelve months old; receiving as her dowry all the claims of her father to the Neapolitan dominions; but as it was stipulated that the baby-bride should remain under the guardianship of Queen Claude until her eighth year, and that the marriage should not be solemnized until she had attained her twelfth, Charles, who was at that moment in possession of Naples, was to pay the annual sum of a hundred thousand crowns to the King of France until the period of the union; and one-half the amount yearly, so long as the princess should continue childless.

Such were the conditions of the peace of Noyon, which afforded a transient season of repose to the respective subjects of both potentates, and was accordingly welcome to all; but it is nevertheless certain that the more able diplomacy of M. de Chièvres had rendered the treaty infinitely more favourable to his master than it would have been had the actual position of Francis been brought more skilfully to bear upon the several questions at issue. Charles could command no sure ingress to his Spanish territories; party spirit was strong against him; he was inexperienced in war, and had yet to establish the reputation as a soldier which Francis had already acquired; while even his claim upon Naples was a divided one. Yet no real advantage was secured to the French king by the league into which he had just entered; the project of marriage was a mere chimera, advanced as a pretext rather than considered as a condition; which,

however well it served to disguise the fact that Charles was in truth paying, or about to pay, an annual tribute to his brother-monarch for that moiety of the crown of Naples which was thus ceded to him, by no means enhanced the interests of Francis, to whom such an equivalent was altogether inadequate. The Navarrese question, moreover, was virtually still as undecided as ever; for while Charles had bound himself vaguely to see justice done, he had been careful not to specify any particular point upon which his intentions might at once be brought to bear; while Francis had retained his right, in the event of this not being accomplished, not only to assist the interests of the queen of Navarre against Charles himself, but even to uphold the Venetians in their opposition to Maximilian.

As this latter privilege, however, threatened to overthrow the designs of Charles, he prevailed upon the emperor to join in the league; and His Imperial Majesty was induced to acquiesce in the suggestion by the offer of a hundred thousand crowns from the state of Venice, and a conviction that Verona could not longer resist the combined attacks of the army of Lautrec, and the famine by which the garrison was already exposed to great and hopeless privations. The accession of Maximilian to the treaty hushed the tempest of war which had so long agitated Europe; for although Francis restored the evacuated city to the Venetians, who once more saw themselves in possession of nearly all the provinces which Louis XII. had endeavoured to wrench from them in 1508, they were still so despoiled and depopulated, that they were deprived of all the elements of self-defence; while the

continued animosity of the Swiss towards France had weakened the resources of Francis himself; a fact of which he was so well aware, that the league was no sooner formally completed than he took instant measures to conciliate all the neighbouring nations; and despatched his uncle, the Bastard of Savoy, Louis de Forbins, and Charles du Plessis to Fribourg, to open a fresh negotiation with the whole Helvetic body; and to propose to them an extension of the peace which had been concluded between himself and eight of their cantons during the previous year. This treaty of "perpetual amity" between France and Switzerland, was discussed, framed, and signed on the 29th of November, 1517; and the pledge then given by the Swiss never again to bear arms against the French was strictly observed, save in the case of a few adventurers, who incited by the prospect of greater gain, or influenced by the violent and undying hatred of the Cardinal of Sion, occasionally enrolled themselves in the ranks of the enemy.

By the same document the Swiss recognised the claim of Francis I. to the Milanese; while he agreed to accord a free amnesty to all the natives of that province who had taken refuge in Switzerland; and to pay off the demands of the troops for past services by the sum of seven hundred thousand golden crowns; with other donations and privileges, which were all clearly defined.

CHAPTER IX.

[1515-17.]

DOMESTIC LIFE OF FRANCIS—THE COURT OF QUEEN CLAUDE—ANTICIPATED BIRTH OF A DAUPHIN—CIRCLE OF MADAME D'ANGOULÊME—LICENTIOUSNESS OF THE YOUNG KING—HE RESOLVES TO FORM A DISTINCT COURT—THE COUNTESS DE CHÂTEAUBRIAND—HER BIRTH AND GIRLHOOD—HER MARRIAGE—THE COUNT IS SUMMONED TO COURT—HIS FOREBODINGS—THE MYSTIC RINGS—MISTAKEN CONFIDENCE—RECEPTION OF THE COUNT BY FRANCIS—TREACHERY OF A CONFIDANT—THE COUNTESS ARRIVES AT CHAMBORD—DISPLEASURE OF HER HUSBAND—A MISUNDERSTANDING—THE QUEEN'S RECEPTION—PRESENTATION OF THE COUNTESS TO THE KING—THE QUEEN AND THE COUNTESS—MISTAKEN VIOLENCE OF M. DE CHÂTEAUBRIAND—THE INFLUENCE OF A COURT ATMOSPHERE—POLICY OF LOUISE DE SAVOIE—M. DE CHÂTEAUBRIAND RETIRES FROM THE COURT.

CHAPTER IX.

[1515-17.]

THUS far the rapid march of more important events has compelled us to pass over in silence the domestic, or rather the private, avocations of Francis; who finding himself at length enabled by a temporary peace to indulge in those libertine pursuits to which he was so painfully addicted, soon wearied of the staid and rigorous circle which his virtuous queen had gathered about her, as well as of the strict retirement to which she was at this moment compelled by the delicate condition of her health, which gave renewed hope of the birth of a dauphin; and for a time he passed all his leisure hours in the lighter court of his mother, where beauty and licentiousness alike attracted him. Unlike Anne de Bretagne, who had stringently discountenanced the presence of ladies at the public festivities, and only suffered them to appear upon occasions of ceremony, where they might serve to enhance her own dignity and that of the royal circle, Madame d'Angoulême had urged upon her son the expediency of including them in all the amusements and pageantries which were constantly recurring; and of permitting them to assume their station as an integral portion of his court; a recommendation to

which he at once gave his unhesitating assent; and thus the wives and daughters of all the principal nobility found themselves emancipated from the shackles of that severe etiquette to which they had previously been subjected; and unfortunately soon overstepped in their pride of freedom the limits of that decorum which should have been their greatest charm.

Soon, however, the young monarch wearied of the fair and frail beauties of his mother's circle, and aspired to still wider conquests. It did not suffice that he had sacrificed the honour, and blighted the home happiness, of many of the brave men who had fought beside him; France still contained much that was at once lovely and high born; and he ere long resolved to form a court for himself which should surpass all those of the rest of Europe, alike in grace and magnificence, and in which women should reign supreme; declaring that a "court without ladies was a year without a spring, or rather a spring without roses."

In furtherance of this design, he summoned about him all the wealthy nobles who habitually resided in their ancestral castles, and who eagerly responded to the call of their Sovereign, and arrived at Amboise accompanied by the females of their families, many of whom were both beautiful and accomplished, and all flattered by so signal a mark of royal favour. One, however, failed him; and that one was precisely the individual whom he had been the most anxious to attract; the young and brilliant Françoise de Foix, Countess de Châteaubriand, whose extraordinary attractions, despite the retirement in which she lived, had been a frequent subject of discourse among his courtiers.

This beautiful woman was the daughter of Phœbus de Foix, Viscount de Lautrec, and of Jeanne d'Aydie, elder daughter and heiress of Odet d'Aydie, Count de Comminges, and was born about the year 1495. The family of Foix was both ancient and illustrious, and recognised no superiors save the princes of the blood, although so much impoverished from the number of its male descendants as to leave the lovely and only daughter of the house without a portion consistent with her rank. Her extreme beauty, however, sufficed to overrule even this consideration, so important in all ages to eligible marriage in France, and brought to her feet the young and accomplished Jean de Laval de Montmorency, Seigneur de Châteaubriand, when she had barely attained her fourteenth year. In 1509 she became his wife; and, happy in an union which left her young and affectionate nature nothing to desire, accompanied him to his castle in Brittany, where she passed the first period of her wedded life in peace and seclusion, without a wish or a care beyond the narrow circle of her home.

This tranquillity was not, however, destined to endure. The Count de Châteaubriand could not evade compliance with the expressed will of his sovereign; but, tenderly attached to his young wife, he was anxious before he suffered her to appear in the circle of the king, to form his own judgment as to the safety with which he might permit her presentation. The known morals of Francis I. were not calculated to inspire confidence; and in the fair, and graceful, and gifted partner of his home, the count had garnered up his all of hope and happiness. Thus then he revolved in his mind, with all the jealousy

of deep affection, every method by which he might secure to himself the treasure of whose value he was so keenly conscious; and so great was his apprehension that some of the profligate companions of the king might devise a method of wiling his wife to court, that he finally decided upon causing two rings of curious workmanship to be made precisely similar; and on the eve of his departure he placed one of them upon her finger, which he enjoined her carefully to examine, and on no account to follow him to Amboise, even should he write and direct her to do so, unless the letter contained another precisely similar. The young countess, overwhelmed by grief at his departure, totally unacquainted with the court, and who desired no greater splendour than that by which she was already surrounded, at once promised obedience; and M. de Châteaubriand, saddened by her tearful caresses, and satisfied that he had made "assurance doubly sure," at length tore himself from her encircling arms, and, leaving her to preside over his stately and gloomy castle, proceeded on his ill-omened journey.

Unfortunately for the count, his heart was too full to be subservient to his reason; and as he saw the distance increase between himself and the beautiful young creature who had so lately wept upon his bosom, his caution gave way before his jealousy, and he entrusted his secret to an old servant, of whose fidelity he believed himself secure. On his arrival at Amboise he was courteously received by the king, who greeted him with half-jesting and half-ironical reproaches that he had come alone to a court where grace and beauty were estimated at their full value; an address to which he gravely replied, by assuring

the disappointed monarch that the countess had remained in Brittany at her own request; volunteering, moreover, to prove the fact of his assertion by writing in the royal presence, should his majesty desire him to do so, an urgent invitation for her to join him. Francis accepted the offer, which necessarily produced no effect; and again and again the experiment was renewed at his request, but always with the same result; until the faithless varlet, to whom the count had confided his cherished secret, won over by the gold of M. de Guise, (who at once conjectured that there was a mystery attached to the unnatural persistence of the lady,) and his lavish promises of the king's favour and protection to the delinquent, betrayed the trust which had been reposed in him, and told the whole story of the mystic ring.

The result of such a discovery may be conjectured. The lacquey was easily bribed to possess himself of the important talisman, which was placed in the hands of an able craftsman, who in a very short time manufactured a third, precisely similar to the duplicate provided by the count. The stolen trinket was then carefully replaced in its usual receptacle, and the counterfeit introduced into a new letter which the duped husband was induced to write; and which, in affectionate and urgent terms, invited the young and innocent recluse to repair without further delay to the court, of which she was constituted to form so bright an ornament.

On the receipt of the important jewel, the countess did not hesitate to obey the summons; nor can it be doubted that she did so with alacrity. Buried in an old castle, with no other society than that of her confessor and

her maids, and with no occupation save what she derived from her breviary and her tapestry-work; separated for the first time from a husband to whom she was fondly attached; and not without some of those vague yearnings after novelty so natural to her age and sex; it can scarcely be matter of surprise that her leave-taking of the sombre residence which she had so long occupied was rendered as brief as possible, and that she was soon upon her road to that court whence she had been hitherto shut out.

At this period the royal circle had removed to Chambord, a locality to which Francis was greatly attached. The château, standing about four leagues from Blois, on the vast plain of Sologne, and between the extensive forests of Boulogne and Bussy, had originally been a mere country house of the Counts of Blois; and was, even at the time of which we write, rather a hunting rendezvous than an actual residence. Situated in the near neighbourhood of the Castle of Romorantin, so long the abode of Louise de Savoie, it had been the scene of many of the boyish sports of the young king; and was, to him, full of agreeable associations, for it was there that he had enjoyed the pleasures of the chase during the banishment of his mother from the court; and he still retained his partiality for the old spot endeared to him by so many delightful recollections.

It was to Chambord, therefore, that Françoise de Foix hastened on the receipt of the treacherous trinket, never doubting for an instant that in so doing she was implicitly obeying the will of her husband; and this very fact was only another link in the luckless chain of the count's misfortunes; as, had the court been assem-

bled either in Paris or at Amboise, the arrival of the countess might have passed unobserved, and time have been thus afforded for an explanation which would have enabled him to effect her instant return to Brittany; but the comparative solitude of Chambord rendered every new event of importance as matter of momentary amusement; and, consequently, the fair traveller no sooner reached the château, attended by her escort, than the news of her advent became universally known; and the astonished and mortified husband found himself utterly unable to avert the evil against which he had believed himself to be so securely guarded.

Cold and constrained, however, was the welcome with which he greeted his beautiful young wife; and they had no sooner retired to his apartments than he upbraided her bitterly for her want of good faith. The countess, bewildered in her turn by such a reception, sank into a chair, overcome by terror and distress; and extending her hand to her irritated husband, displayed upon one of her slender fingers the two rings by which he had himself desired that she should govern her conduct. More and more astonished, the count flew to the casket in which his treasure had been concealed, and there, in its velvet envelope, still lay the ring in which he had confided for safety.

"Are you now convinced, Jean?" asked the weeping countess, who had anxiously watched his movements.

"I am, madam;" was the stern reply; "and I have learnt that to your other accomplishments you add that of a duplicity and talent for intrigue of which I had assuredly never suspected you to be possessed. Henceforward we shall better comprehend each other."

"Count!" exclaimed the agonized wife, wringing her hands; "Explain to me what you mean. Have I done wrong in coming here? Did you not yourself summon me? Have I not remained contentedly in Brittany until the ring reached me, which was to assure me that I acted in obedience to your wishes by rejoining you? Speak! In what have I failed in my duty as a wife?"

"The question is now needless, madam;" was the rejoinder; "and a few weeks hence you will, in all probability, no longer have the courage to ask it;" and he turned to leave the room.

"Nay, Jean, you shall not leave me in anger;" cried Françoise springing from her seat, and grasping his arm; "only let me understand my fault, and repair it."

"It is too late;" said the count moodily; "the evil is now, as you must have foreseen, totally irreparable. I never sent that ring, as you well know; I have been deceived in you; but from this hour I shall be enabled to estimate your affection at its proper value."

"You never sent that ring?" echoed the young countess, upon whom the remainder of his words had been lost; "Whence came it then?" and she looked earnestly upon the hand which bore it.

"Nay, nay; this is idle, madam;" replied the count with a bitter laugh. "From whom could it have come save from him, who through your courteous and indulgent agency was enabled to have it made? But let us bandy words no longer. You have taken your destiny into your own hands. You are now at court, and have duties to perform with which even your husband will have no right to interfere. Dry your eyes, therefore, for within

an hour you must wait upon the queen, and you have little time to spare. I will order your women to attend you." And shaking off her grasp, he strode coldly from the apartment.

But even yet the young and pure mind of Françoise de Foix was unable to fathom the meaning of her husband. She only felt that he was changed; how changed! She only comprehended that he had ceased to love her; for she could not estimate the force of that engrossing and jealous affection which thus played the traitor to its own interests, and converted an attached husband into an ungenerous tyrant. But she had, as he had just declared, few moments to spare to such reflections. The queen held a reception-circle that very evening, at which it was necessary that she should be presented; and accordingly, with a sick and trembling heart, she resigned herself to the hands of her women; and when at length the count reappeared in order to conduct her to the queen's apartments, he shuddered as his eye fell upon her, radiant in youth and beauty, and sparkling with jewels.

The opposition which had been offered to his wishes, had, as a natural consequence, only heightened the curiosity of the young monarch; and accordingly, the countess had no sooner paid her respects to the queen, than, waving back the courtiers by whom he was immediately surrounded, he advanced a step forward, and with a courteous smile awaited her approach.

"Nay, nay;" he said graciously, as she would have bent her knee before him; "It is not for the fair Countess de Châteaubriand to kneel even to a king.

You are welcome, madam, even although your advent has been a somewhat tardy one."

"Sire,"—commenced the lady with a burning blush.

"We know all, madam;" interposed Francis with a gay laugh, through which pierced a triumph he was unable altogether to conceal; "You are a votary of solitude; a lover of silent streams and hoary mountains; but, believe me, these are not the only objects for bright eyes to dwell upon. We must make a convert of you, madam, or it will be said that our court has lost its charm. M. de Châteaubriand;" and his lip curled for an instant as he addressed the count, whose moody brow sufficiently betrayed his secret annoyance, and formed a singular contrast with the curious and supercilious looks which were turned upon him; "we depend on you to inspire your charming wife with less gloomy tastes: you have already done this most loyally by letter, and must now complete your work. Once more, madam, you are welcome. In a few days your fitting post at court shall be assigned to you. And now, gentlemen, to our games." And without awaiting the acknowledgment of the count, he turned upon his heel, and approached a table covered with dice and playing-cards, which had been originally introduced into France in the reign of Charles VI, by the beautiful and devoted Odette de Champdivers, for the amusement of that monarch during his paroxysms of insanity.

In a few moments all the nobles of the court circle were absorbed by the chances of the different games in which they were engaged, save only M. de Châteaubriand, who stationed himself behind the chair of the queen,

while his wife, at her desire, seated herself on a cushion at her feet. The gentle Claude, accustomed to the triumphant demeanour and coquettish bearing of those beauties whom Francis, on their first presentation, had honoured by his particular notice, and totally unaware of the unworthy intrigue by which the young countess had been allured to the court, found herself singularly attracted by the timid and lovely woman, from whose cheek the blush had not yet faded; and, as if to complete the discomfiture of the count, added her own courteous reproaches to those of her royal husband.

"But you have a child;" she said, suddenly checking herself with a fond smile of maternal love; "and I can understand your reluctance. We must endeavour to compensate to you for such a sacrifice."

For a moment the brow of the count cleared. His wife might yet be saved if attached to the circle of the pure-minded queen! But again he glanced at her, as her beaming eyes were raised in gratitude to her royal mistress, and he felt the utter futility of such a hope; for the conviction fell cold upon his heart, that amid all the galaxy of beauty by which he was surrounded, he must look in vain for loveliness like hers.

Nor was Francis, who from the first moment of his meeting with the young countess, was, or believed himself to be, deeply enamoured of her personal charms, and attracted by her graceful timidity, much more at ease than the count himself. Unaccustomed to opposition, and habituated, when it chanced to present itself, to overrule it by such extreme measures as tended to prove that neither his chivalry towards the weaker sex,

nor his gratitude towards the most zealous of his subjects, could turn him from his purpose, he was well aware that M. de Châteaubriand was likely to prove less plastic in his hands than most of those yielding husbands with whom he had hitherto been brought into contact; while, conscious that the countess herself was as yet wholly unaware of the deception to which she had fallen a victim, and detecting in her proud, although simple bearing, a sense of personal dignity which could not fail to delay, even should it not eventually altogether thwart his projects; he was, for the first time, almost at a loss how to proceed; and it is extremely probable that had not the count, blinded by his ungenerous suspicions, himself alienated the affections of his young wife, Françoise de Foix might have escaped the snare which had been laid for her. As it was, however, the occasional privacy of M. and Madame de Châteaubriand was embittered by tears and reproaches; and as every fresh courtesy of Francis towards his wife furnished the count with a new subject of invective and violence, it was not long ere the unhappy countess began to sigh for the hour which would summon her to the circle of the king, and thus release her from invective and contempt.

On the return of the court to Amboise, Madame de Châteaubriand was welcomed with especial courtesy by Louise de Savoie, who had already ascertained the feelings of her son towards the young and brilliant stranger, whose eyes were even thus early learning to forget the use of tears; and whose cheek flushed, perhaps, but no longer burnt, under the gaze of the king. The heart soon loses its bloom beneath the language of flattery;

Françoise had a sovereign at her feet; the atmosphere of a licentious court was around her, and evil advisers at her side; while a deeply-rooted terror of the resentment of a husband whom she had unwittingly offended, unhappily combined with these to dazzle, bewilder, and subdue her. She still trembled, but she did not turn away from the abyss which yawned before her eyes. Suspected by the man on whom she had lavished all the affection of her girlhood; and separated from her infant, whose purity might have enfolded her as with the wings of an angel, and saved her from herself, she sickened at her utter helplessness; and at length forgetting all, save her own vacuity of heart, and dreading lest in some moment of exasperation her husband should brave the anger of the king, and immure her once more in his ancestral castle, with himself as her sole companion, she yielded to the dishonour which had been prepared for her, and added another to the list of those victims whom the licentiousness of Francis had already sacrificed to his selfishness.

Madame de Châteaubriand, however, fallen as she was, still shrank from the publicity of vice in which some of her predecessors had discovered the proudest result of the king's attachment; and for a time the unfortunate *liaison* was carefully concealed; although this could not be so skilfully accomplished as to deceive the anxious and watchful husband, or the experienced Louise de Savoie; who discerning nothing more dangerous in the countess than her beauty, and satisfied that she had little to apprehend from her ambition, affected not to remark the devotion of the king, and continued to lavish upon the new favourite all the graceful

courtesies which could encourage her in her precarious and sinful career.

Far otherwise was it, however, with the injured count; who no sooner ascertained that his dishonour was accomplished, than he instantly withdrew from the theatre of his disgrace, and retired to that peaceful home in Brittany which the absence of his wife's affection had rendered a desert. He vouchsafed neither expostulation nor reproach; the past, as he bitterly remembered, could never be recalled: his child was motherless, and she was now his only earthly link; he had done with the world, and the world with him. Others who had been subjected to the like indignity might haunt the saloons of royalty, and sweep the earth with their plumed hats before the spoiler of their homes; M. de Châteaubriand was not of these; he could suffer, but he could not stoop to kiss the hand that smote him; and thus, without a word, without a sign, he departed from the court, and his existence was ere long forgotten.

CHAPTER X.

[1517—18.]

FRANCIS FORMS PROJECTS FOR THE EMBELLISHMENT OF HIS KINGDOM AND THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF LITERATURE—BIRTH OF A DAUPHIN—FRANCIS INVITES LEO X. TO BECOME SPONSOR TO THE YOUNG PRINCE—THE ROYAL CHRISTENING—RESIGNATION OF QUEEN CLAUDE—MARRIAGE OF LORENZO DE' MEDICI AND MADELAINE DE LA TOUR-D'AUVERGNE—MUNIFICENCE OF THE POPE—A FANCY BALL IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY—THE BRIDAL BANQUET—INCREASING INFLUENCE OF MADAME DE CHÂTEAUBRIAND—LOUISE DE SAVOIE BECOMES JEALOUS OF HER POWER OVER THE KING—FORBEARANCE OF THE QUEEN—THE COUNTESS PUSHES THE FORTUNES OF HER BROTHERS—THE HUNTING-PARTY—LAUTREC APPOINTED GOVERNOR OF THE MILANESE—THE RECALL OF BOURBON—INDIGNATION OF THE DUCHESS-MOTHER—BOURBON ARRIVES AT COURT—LOVE-VISIONS—JEALOUSY OF FRANCIS—THE CHANCELLOR ENDEAVOURS TO EFFECT THE RECOGNITION OF THE CONCORDAT—PERPLEXITY OF THE KING—MAGISTERIAL CORRUPTION—PERTINACITY OF FRANCIS—DISMISSAL OF THE DELEGATES—REGISTRATION OF THE CONCORDAT—DEMONSTRATION OF THE UNIVERSITY—UNPOPULARITY OF THE KING.

CHAPTER X.

[1517—18.]

FRANCIS having at this period repaired, in so far as it was possible, the error of which his predecessor had been guilty, by conciliating the Swiss; and believing himself to be at once free from any immediate risk of foreign aggression, and secure of the Milanese, in whose conquest he had alike consumed the revenues of the state and the first years of his reign, began to turn his attention to the embellishment of his kingdom, and the interests of literature. Himself, as we have already shown, but a superficial scholar, he was, nevertheless, fully aware of the importance of introducing and encouraging a taste for polite learning among his subjects; and although his mind, when not engrossed by his passion for Madame de Châteaubriand, which soon ceased to be a secret to the court, was occasionally disturbed by doubts of the acceptance of the *concordat*, he amused himself in forming splendid projects, both as regarded the public edifices, and the establishment of a great national college.

For a brief period he was, however, diverted from this new and worthy ambition by the birth of a dauphin,

an event which was hailed alike by the young king and his subjects with enthusiastic delight. The infant prince was born at Amboise on the 28th of February, 1517; and he had scarcely seen the light before Francis despatched M. de Saint-Mesme, a nobleman of his household, to Rome, at once formally to communicate this intelligence to the sovereign pontiff, and privately to invite him to become sponsor to the royal infant, and thus consolidate the friendly alliance which existed between them.[1] The envoy was most graciously received, nor did the pope attempt to conceal the satisfaction which he experienced from the proposition; and, after having sumptuously entertained M. de Saint-Mesme during several days while the baptismal presents were in preparation, he finally dismissed him with great honour; and he left the Holy City, accompanied by Lorenzo de' Medici, the nephew of the pontiff, who was appointed to officiate as his proxy, and the Florentine ambassadors.

On the arrival of the illustrious party at Amboise, they were met beyond the gates of the city by all the princes of the blood, and great nobles of the court, by whom they were conducted to the king. The other sponsors selected by Francis to assist at the august ceremony were the Duke de Lorraine and Madame de Bourbon;[2] and there

[1] Bacon, in his "Life and Times of Francis I," attributes the overture to Leo X; but as the Memoirs of Fleuranges and Du Bellay alike assert it to have been the act of the French king, I have deemed it expedient to follow their authority.

[2] The "Loyal Servant" states the godmother of the royal infant to have been the Duchess d'Alençon; but it is to be presumed that the authority of Fleuranges, who assisted at the ceremony, is the more correct of the two.

was a smile upon every lip save that of the meek mother of the new idol, who at length found her last hope of regaining the affections of her volatile husband extinguished for ever. She had trusted with all a woman's confidence that the birth of a son would restore him to her; but in the very tone of his address, as he coldly thanked her for the present which she had made to France, she read all her lone and loveless future; and as her pale cheek fell back upon the pillow, she closed her heavy eyelids to conceal the tears which would not be suppressed, and humbled herself in prayer.

None, however, save her immediate attendants, were conscious, amid the general joy, that there was a bursting and a bleeding heart beneath the proud roof of the palace of Amboise. Princes and nobles feasted at the table of the king; the silvery sound of women's laughter echoed through the vast apartments; the guards were merry at their posts, and the varlets at their toil. France at length boasted a dauphin; and every other consideration was swallowed up in that one joyous conviction.

The ceremony of baptism was invested with all the splendour of which it was susceptible. Plumed hats and jewelled vests were mingled with brocades and laces; the fairest and noblest of France were grouped with distinguished individuals of other nations, among whom one of the most remarkable was the Prince of Orange, who arrived, attended by a magnificent retinue, to offer his congratulations to the king; but was so coldly received as to retire in disgust, and to volunteer his services to Charles V, by whom they were eagerly and courteously

accepted. The altar of the palace-chapel blazed with precious stones, and its aisles were heavy with the fumes of frankincense; gorgeously attired prelates lined the sanctuary, and majestic women filled the galleries of the tribune; harmonious voices pealed out the hymn of praise; and the infant prince, shrouded in ermine and velvet, received the name of Francis from the courtly lips of Lorenzo de' Medici. The service once concluded, the brilliant crowd swept onward from the chapel towards the great court-yard, which had been entirely enclosed both above and around with party-coloured draperies, in order to protect the guests from the weather during the banquet; the grand-saloon of the palace having been found inadequate to afford accommodation to so numerous an assemblage. After the repast, which was prolonged until a late hour, this magnificent temporary hall was illuminated by torches; and dancing, lotteries, and dice occupied the remainder of the night.

Nor were the baptismal festivities confined to Amboise, for throughout the whole realm of France the people vied with each other in testifying their joy at the birth of a dauphin. The streets of Paris were filled with revellers, who were entertained at the expense of the authorities; and at Orleans two temporary fountains were erected in front of the Hôtel de Ville, which poured forth white and red wine from sunrise to sunset. The glad shouting of the populace responded to the pealing of the cannon from the fortresses; and for several days all business was suspended.

Accustomed as he had been to the pontifical splendour of his uncle's court, Lorenzo de' Medici was dazzled by

the magnificence of all around him. The chivalric courtesies of the king, the gracious smiles of the regent,[1] the lavish profusion of the great nobles, and the extreme beauty of the fair women who thronged the palace, so far exceeded all his previous experience, that he at once became reconciled to the will of his uncle, by whom he had been charged to propose a treaty of marriage between himself and Madelaine de la Tour-d'Auvergne, the younger daughter of the Count de Boulogne and Auvergne, whose sister had married the Duke d'Aubigny. This lady, who was young and extremely beautiful, was connected with the royal family through her mother, who had been a princess of Bourbon;[2] and it was not without considerable disappointment that some of the wealthiest nobles in the kingdom saw her hand bestowed upon a foreigner.

Francis, however, effected a sagacious stroke of policy by the concession; as he required in return a pledge from Lorenzo, that both he and all his family should bind themselves to uphold the interests of France, with which this marriage would tend so closely to unite them. The Florentine at once acceded to this arrangement; but, even enamoured as he was of the fair girl who was about to become his wife, he was still wary enough to stipulate in return, that the French king should withdraw his protection from the Duke d'Urbino, whose ally

[1] Madame d'Angoulême was commonly so called after her temporary regency.

[2] Madelaine de la Tour-d'Auvergne was the daughter and coheiress of Jean, Count de Boulogne, and Joanna, the daughter of Jean, Duke de Vendôme.

he then was, and offer no impediment to his own attempt to possess himself of the duchy. To this proposition Francis, after some demur, in his turn consented; and preparations were forthwith commenced for the celebration of this ill-omened marriage, which was fated to exert so mighty an influence on the destinies of France, by giving birth to Catherine de' Medici.

Once more the halls of Amboise were loud with festivity, and radiant with splendour; and, on the return of the bridal party from the chapel, Francis invested the bridegroom with the cross of St. Michael, having previously presented him with an annual revenue of ten thousand crowns; and lavished upon the bride presents of the most costly description.

In this munificence he was, however, even exceeded by the pope; who, in the height of his self-gratulation at the new aggrandisement of his family, despatched both to the Queen of France, and to the bride, gifts of so costly a nature as to excite universal astonishment; among which, (probably the most remarkable at the period) was a state-bed, inlaid with mother-of-pearl, tortoise-shell, and ivory; while so great was his profusion, that a train of thirty-six horses were required to convey all these treasures to the capital.

The most novel feature of the court-festival at this marriage, was the introduction of distinct character dances, executed entirely by the youngest and most beautiful women of the royal circle; who, divided into parties of twelve, each assumed some national costume, of which the illusion was further heightened by the accompaniment of corresponding instruments. As the number of these

courtly *coryphées* amounted to seventy, the whole of the morning was consumed in witnessing their performances; after which the king conducted the bride to the banqueting table, followed by her new-made husband leading Madame d'Angoulême; and having in their suite all the princes of the blood, foreign ambassadors, and nobles, each according to his order of precedence. As the last of the guests passed the threshold, the trumpets sounded, and the king, advancing to the upper end of the hall, placed his mother upon his right hand; and then, raising his feathered hat for an instant, motioned to the courtly party to take their seats. With the exception of the Duchess d'Angoulême and the bride, no lady had a place at the royal table; Madame de Châteaubriand herself, upon this stringent occasion of court etiquette, being compelled to forego her ordinary privilege. As the several courses were removed, the trumpets again pealed out, and, during the intervals, the royal musicians kept up an uninterrupted stream of harmony. At the close of the banquet dancing was resumed, and continued until an hour past midnight, amid a blaze of flambeaux and torches which rivalled the light of day.

On the morrow the festivities were resumed; and jousts, skirmishes, sham-fights, sieges, and other manly sports, were varied by balls, *mysteries*, hunting-parties, and such pastimes as might be shared by the young beauties of the court, during several weeks; after which the king took leave of the newly-married pair, who departed for Italy accompanied by the Duke d'Aubigny, the brother-in-law of the bride, whom he had appointed his ambassador to the pope; and who, in that capacity,

acquitted himself so admirably as to insure the lasting alliance of the Medici with France.

Never again, however, was the unfortunate Madelaine de la Tour-d'Auvergne destined to visit her beloved country, to whose interests she had been a passive although a reluctant victim. In little more than a year, she had become the mother of Catherine de' Medici, and was in her grave; whither she was followed in the short space of five days by her husband, both having fallen martyrs to a contagious disease in April, 1519.

As the court slowly subsided into tranquillity, after the long effervescence of almost delirious dissipation in which it had been immersed, the increasing influence of Madame de Châteaubriand became more and more apparent. She assumed no personal consequence, it is true; but, urged on by her family, she evinced the most anxious desire to enrich her three brothers; and, in order to accomplish this project, began to interfere in the affairs of state with a pertinacity which aroused all the jealousy of Louise de Savoie, who had been so long accustomed to mould her son to her will, that she could ill brook the rivalry of power which was thus forced upon her. Nor was it long ere she became painfully aware that the contest was altogether unequal; and that the indulgence with which she had, from his very boyhood, visited, or rather encouraged, the passions of her son, was destined to prove her own punishment. Hitherto she had been all in all to him; for the patient and neglected queen had put forth no claim to popularity; and had shrunk alike from every cabal which had been formed about her;

devoting herself entirely to her children, of two of whom she was so soon to be bereaved; and to those works of charity and acts of devotion by which she hoped one day to purchase the affections of her husband. The previous intrigues of the young king had been merely the result of a passing fancy, and, as such, incapable of weakening the influence of his mother; and even in her first judgment of Françoise de Foix the sagacious duchess had not deceived herself; but she had committed the grievous and irreparable error of forgetting, that little as the young countess might seek or estimate self-aggrandisement, there were those about her, who, unlike her high-hearted husband, would not disdain to make her dishonour the pedestal of their own fortunes; and this was precisely that which came to pass.

It has been already stated, that noble as they were by birth, the family of Françoise de Foix were by no means wealthy; and it was consequently inevitable that, having once accustomed themselves to look upon the dishonour of their sister with indifference, her three brothers, Messieurs de Lautrec, de Lascun, and de Lespare, should regard her as the destined architect of their fortunes; and thus involve her in intrigues and cabals, for which she was totally unfitted by nature. The first glaring instance of her unbounded influence over her royal lover, was exhibited in the recall of the Connétable de Bourbon from Milan, where he had remained since its conquest as the Lieutenant-General of the king; and the substitution of the Maréchal de Lautrec, whose ambition could be satisfied only by the highest and most honourable charge in the army.

It was during a hunting-party in the forest of Bussy, when, fatigued and heated with the chase, Francis reined up his panting horse beside the palfrey of the young countess; and with one hand caressing its silken mane, received with a fond smile her whispered compliments upon his prowess, that this great and eventful change was fated to be arranged. Long as she had meditated upon it, and anxious as she had become to insure its success, a certain timidity had hitherto restrained her from entering formally upon the subject; but on this occasion, a single question from the enamoured monarch liberated her at once from her difficulty. They were alone, and secure for a time from all interruption; the hunt having led the whole of the royal suite to another and a distant quarter of the forest; the sunlight fell in living mosaics upon the mossy turf, when the quivering leaves afforded it a momentary passage; and the low sweet wind, as it wandered past, swept the long ringlets of the countess almost to the cheek of her companion as he leant towards her.

"On the faith of a gentleman!"[1] exclaimed Francis; "you have followed the hunt bravely to-day, and have shamed many a cavalier, who will nevertheless vaunt

[1] *Foy de Gentil-Homme* was the habitual oath of Francis I, and, indeed, the only one which he permitted to pass his lips. Brantôme informs us that the three preceding kings of France had likewise each his favourite ejaculation; and that a quatrain was written in commemoration, thus:—

"Quand la 'Pasque Dieu,' décéda . . . . Louys XI.
'Par le Jour-Dieu,' luy succéda. . . . . Charles VIII.
'Le Diable m'emporte,' s'en tint près . . Louys XII.
'Foy de Gentil-Homme' vint après. . . François I."

of his prowess at the banquet erewhile. But where were your thoughts, *ma mie?* I could not watch them as I did your bright eyes, and your slender figure." And he looked tenderly in her face, as though he already anticipated the flattering answer.

"I need surely not inform your majesty that they were, as ever, fixed upon yourself; but, alas! not with undivided happiness;" said the lady.

"And why so?" demanded the king abruptly: "These are strange words from the lips of Françoise de Foix."

"They are, Sire; but they are at least truthful. Are you not all the world to me? And can I reflect upon any possible injury to your august name without dismay?"

"You speak in enigmas, *Madame;* I scarcely know you in this new character. Explain your meaning, and let us once more understand each other."

"My duty is obedience;" said the beautiful countess, as she suffered her large lustrous eyes to rest for a moment upon the hand which was still plunged amid the mane of her palfrey, and then raised them timidly and tearfully to the face of the king; "With your image was blended that of the Connétable de Bourbon."

"Ha! our good cousin Charles de Montpensier;" smiled Francis; "and what of him, fair dame?"

"Simply, Sire, that your royal favour has rendered him too arrogant for the subject of such a master; and that I have certain advices from Milan, which lead me to suspect his loyalty. Already the most wealthy and powerful noble of France, he has nothing to anticipate at home; and his ambition is no secret."

Francis started, and sat erect in his saddle.

"The duchy of Milan;" pursued the countess; "would be a tempting exchange for the sword of Connétable; and M. de Bourbon has already secured the hearts of his vice-regal subjects."

"Ha, indeed!" exclaimed her listener vehemently; "Is it so? In good truth this must be looked to. But in whom can we trust, if Charles de Montpensier, whom we have raised to the highest dignity in the realm, turn traitor to our interests?"

"One for whom your majesty has done less;" said Françoise steadily; "One who still remembers at whose hands he holds his favour; and who has already afforded proof both of his loyalty and his devotion."

"True;" replied the king thoughtfully, and with a moody brow; "doubtless there are many such in our good kingdom of France; but the choice will be no easy one. Besides, Marguerite loves Bourbon like a brother, and will reproach me should I offer him an affront."

"The loss of the Milanese would be an affront to your majesty which no reproach could reach;" retorted the favourite.

"On the faith of a gentleman, you are right, madam!" almost shouted Francis, who was stung to the very core by the bare supposition of such an indignity; "The Connétable shall be recalled. And now, since you have become a counsellor, and plunged into the stormy sea of state affairs, you must complete your work, and help me to select his successor."

"Your majesty has not forgotten Ravenna?" asked the countess with her most sunny smile.

The eye of the young king brightened. "Ha! I read the meaning of that fair plotting face. No, *ma mie*, I have forgotten neither Ravenna, nor the brilliant services of your brother; but you should also remember that he is already a Marshal of France."

"The Duke de Bourbon is Constable;" said the countess boldly; "and, like Lautrec, owes his dignity to your majesty."

"Why! you have suddenly become as uncompromising as Duprat himself!" laughed Francis, as he touched her cheek lightly with his fringed glove; "Enough, however, for the present; this shall be considered."

"You will not consult the duchess, Sire?" asked Françoise anxiously.

"Not if you forbid it; but here come the hunt, with De Guise and Fleuranges in the van. Ha! on the faith of a gentleman, they have lost their quarry!"

"And I my cause, Sire—the first which I have ever undertaken. Pardon me; I overrated my influence with your majesty." And the spoilt beauty burst into tears, half of mortification and half of disappointment.

"Françoise!" exclaimed the young king, hurriedly extending his hand, which she clasped in her slender fingers; "dear Françoise, dry your eyes, or you will unman me. Your cause is won. Lautrec shall have the Milanese."

The countess had no time for thanks. In another instant all the sportsmen were grouped about the king, the plumes of their hats mingling with the manes of their horses, as they were respectfully withdrawn; the

details of the unsuccessful hunt were rapidly given; and then, with tightened reins, the whole noble party galloped back to Chambord.

Francis redeemed his pledge. The Connétable was recalled, and the Maréchal de Lautrec formally invested with the government of the Milanese; to the great disgust of Bourbon, who received with undisguised coldness the assurances of the king that he could not longer forego the gratification of his presence in France. In how far the arguments of Madamè de Châteaubriand had wronged this haughty noble cannot be ascertained; although from the almost regal state which he affected while at Milan, and the facility with which he afterwards transferred his services to a hostile sovereign, it appears probable that his loyalty might have failed before his ambition, had he once felt himself assured of success in seizing the sovereignty of the duchy; an inference which is, moreover, strengthened by his resolute and undisguised hostility to Leo X, the ally of his own monarch. Suffice it, however, that whatever might have been his ulterior projects, they were now overthrown for ever; and he found himself compelled to exchange his quasi-royalty for a less exalted station.

Meanwhile, the indignation of Madame d'Angoulême exceeded all bounds when she discovered that so important a measure had been effected without her sanction; and as the identity of the new viceroy sufficiently explained by whose influence his elevation had been accomplished, her hatred towards the favourite became more apparent. It was not, however, for the compulsatory return of the Connétable that Louise de Savoie felt exasperated against

the countess, but simply because the event demonstrated the immense power which she had obtained over the mind of Francis, and the assurance that thenceforward she must content herself with sharing the supremacy which had once been entirely her own. The arrival of Charles de Bourbon at the court was, on the contrary, a source of satisfaction; for, as we have already hinted, she had suffered herself to conceive a passion for that prince to which, despite the maturity of her age, she still trusted that he would not ultimately prove insensible. She was ignorant of his attachment to her daughter; and conscious that she was still one of the handsomest women in France, as well as the mother of the Sovereign, she pleased herself with the belief that opportunity alone was wanting to bring him to her feet.

Strange, however, are the mysteries of the human heart. Never for an instant had Bourbon forgotten Marguerite; he still worshipped her as his first love; and when he crossed the frontiers, her image rose as freshly before him as on the day when her murmured farewell had fallen upon his ear like muffled music in the saloon of Amboise; yet, nevertheless, he no sooner encountered the smile of the Countess de Châteaubriand, his active enemy against whom he had vowed an undying enmity, than he became her slave. Françoise, whose heart had, as a natural consequence, become vitiated by a career of avowed profligacy, did not view with indifference the effect produced by her beauty; and the prejudices and suspicions of the king, already awakened against the duke by her own representations, acquired strength from the interest which she suddenly

and unexpectedly took in all that concerned him. Herein, however, Francis wronged the Connétable; who, thralled as he might be, and undoubtedly was, by the charms of the young countess, was too proud to volunteer a rivalry with the Admiral de Bonnivet; and he had not passed eight-and-forty hours at court ere he heard the name of that noble coupled with that of the king's favourite in a manner which reflected no honour upon either party.

Some rumour of the same nature had also reached the ear of Francis himself, and he had even mentioned the circumstance to the countess with an asperity which might have satisfied her that she had little indulgence to expect should he prove the truth of the report; but Françoise had only found food for mirth in the accusation, and even mimicked with such charming talent the amorous looks and gestures of the suspected courtier, that the wrath of the king was converted into amusement. Brantôme asserts, that in order the better to hoodwink her royal paramour, she did not disdain to make sport of the credulity of the admiral, in supposing that one who was loved by Francis could for a moment be induced to listen to his own suit; declaring that she permitted his familiarities only because his conversation entertained her, and that he made her merry even when her heart was sad; and by these devices she turned away the attention of the young monarch, and directed his jealousy to a wrong quarter in order the better to pursue her intrigue. Be this as it may, it is certain that the distaste of Francis for the Duke de Bourbon increased daily; while the passion of Bonnivet for the fair favourite, which had become sufficiently notorious to furnish matter for

the gossips of the court, never for an instant affected his favour. His early attachment to the Duchess d'Alençon had been no secret to the king; and as he still affected the same hopeless devotion, Francis, convinced by the arguments of the countess, learnt to regard his attentions to herself as the mere chivalric services of a true knight to the most beautiful woman of his acquaintance.

Amid all these intrigues the chancellor continued his efforts to secure the recognition of the *Concordat* by the parliament of Paris. Francis had solemnly pledged his word to the pope that he would compel its observance, and was necessarily anxious to see his promise fulfilled; not only because it involved his good understanding with the sovereign-pontiff himself, but because upon that understanding hinged his tranquil possession of the duchy of Milan. The debates upon the Pragmatic Sanction had also tended to increase the previous difficulties under which he laboured to a fearful extent. His personal influence in the elections had sensibly declined; the morals of the clergy had degenerated, and serious abuses had arisen in the religious houses; the most sacred considerations were sacrificed to party-feeling; all such individuals as were known to be in favour of rigid discipline were rejected, and men of more than suspicious morals were elevated to the highest ecclesiastical dignities. No unanimous suffrage could be secured even for the most eligible candidate; at every election there was a division of votes; and as no final arrangement could be effected without rancour and vindictiveness, the one party insisting upon their majority of voices, and the other accusing their opponents of simony, the

most disgraceful processes at law ensued, in which neither exposure nor invective were spared.

Although the conditions of the *Concordat* had never been officially promulgated, it had nevertheless created universal discontent. The magistrates, indignant that their privileges had been invaded, and wilfully overlooking the fact that the church could not exist in its primitive state in the sixteenth century, loudly accused both their own monarch and the pope of having assumed to themselves a power to which they had no pretension; and, as a natural consequence, this bold assertion coming from a body of men deeply versed in ecclesiastical law, and basing their arguments upon the maxims of the two great councils of Constance and Bâle, produced a strong effect upon the minor clergy and the middle classes, who had long been accustomed to regard the decisions of those councils as their code of action.

Nevertheless, Francis urged forward the recognition of the *Concordat* with the pertinacity of a monarch who will tolerate no opposition to his will. In the month of June it was presented for registration to the parliament of Paris, where it occasioned the most stormy discussions; and was openly opposed by M. de Sièvre, the advocate-general; which so enraged the king that he despatched the Bastard of Savoy, his uncle, during one of the sittings, to insist upon its immediate recognition and acceptance; instructing him, moreover, to remain until the registration had taken place. The first president expostulated warmly upon this innovation; representing to M. de Savoie that he could not be present at the deliberations of the chamber without *taking the oath*

as a member of its body; and requested him to retire, which he was compelled reluctantly to do, leaving his mission unaccomplished. The parliament, in their turn, sent their president, M. de la Haye, to remonstrate with the monarch; alleging that as M. Réné de Savoie was not a member of their body, his interference was illegal; an expostulation to which Francis only replied by the reiterated exclamation:—"He shall be there! He shall be there! I will no longer tolerate the cavillers who oppose my pleasure; I can replace them by better men who are ready to do their duty like loyal subjects."

The delegates then ventured respectfully to remind him of the deference with which his predecessor had invariably received every remonstrance offered by his good and faithful deputies; but they had soon reason to repent their boldness. Francis was at this period at Nempont, near Montreuil, where he was engaged in strengthening the fortresses of Picardy, and in no mood to be controlled by forms, or schooled into submission to his own subjects. He was piqued, moreover, by the inferred distinction between himself and the late king, and had no sooner heard the president to an end than he exclaimed haughtily:—"I am aware that there are men in my parliament who are both wise and worthy; but I know also that there are others who are audacious, turbulent, and mischievous. I am not ignorant either of their identity or their arguments. You expatiate to me upon the justice of Louis XII, I am just also; but like him I shall know how to compel obedience."

M. de la Haye would still have remonstrated, but the anger of Francis, who ill brooked opposition at any time,

only became more and more violent; and he finally dismissed his unwelcome visitor with a threat that he would send all who opposed his will to Toulouse or Bourdeaux.

Nevertheless, when he became more cool, he suffered the parliament to delay the registration of the *Concordat* under divers pretexts, lest by too great a precipitation he should increase the distaste of the nation to a law which he considered necessary to insure the welfare of the church, and the tranquillity of the kingdom. The discussions accordingly continued from the 13th of July until the 24th of the same month, in the presence of M. de Savoie; at the expiration of that period the whole body came to the decision that they could not register the *Concordat*, its provisions being at variance with the Pragmatic Sanction, which they were compelled to observe; declaring at the same time that in order to enact an affair of such paramount importance, it was necessary to convene a national council.

Renewed negotiations were then opened between the court and the parliament, but no satisfactory result could be obtained; and on the 13th of January, 1518, the counsellors, Messrs. de Soyen and Verjus, were deputed to wait upon the king, for the purpose of presenting to him a document in which they represented that he would compromise the independence and dignity of his crown by such a submission to the pope, and at the same time diminish the public revenues.

The court was then sojourning at Amboise; and although apprised of the arrival of the delegates, Francis gave no orders for their reception or accommodation, nor

was it until the 24th of the month that he condescended to receive them; when in reply to their communication he coldly and haughtily remarked, that his chancellor had overruled all their objections in a document which he considered as peremptory and conclusive. The two counsellors respectfully requested a copy of this important paper, upon which the king lost his temper, and angrily declared that he would not consent to have an interminable process created out of a subject upon which his pleasure should suffice. "It would appear;" he added sternly; "that my parliament desires to constitute itself a second Venetian senate; but I will let them know that I am King of France, and that my will is law. The ecclesiastics who form a portion of your body, listen to nothing save what affects their own personal interests; they have become counsellors only the more readily to possess themselves of bishoprics and abbeys, and to delude themselves with the belief, that under cover of certain privileges they are no longer my subjects, and that I cannot take their heads should such be my royal pleasure. They are deceived, however, as some among them may ere long discover to their cost. I will have no more of them in my parliament; that they were ever admitted there at all was the act of my predecessors; and my power is equally great to expel them, and to establish a contrary law. The whole body has become over arrogant, and shall in future confine itself to the administration of justice, which is now worse dispensed than it has been for the last hundred years."

It was at the close of the evening banquet that this unsatisfactory interview took place; and Francis finally

dismissed the discomfited delegates with an order to leave Amboise by six o'clock on the following morning, warning them that if they did not obey, he would cause them both to be flung into the castle moat.

After an audience of this description all further attempt at remonstrance was abandoned by the parliament, although they still pursued their discussions upon the question; but the patience of the king being finally exhausted, on the 12th of March M. de la Tremouille, the grand chamberlain, presented himself to the chamber during one of its sittings, and commanded its members, in the name of the monarch, to proceed immediately to the registration of the contested *Concordat*, and to waste no more time in deliberating upon a subject which was already decided. As they still hesitated, some of his followers warned them to beware of further exasperating the anger of Francis, who had declared that should they persist in their contumacy, not only their own lives should be the forfeit of their disloyalty, but that he would annihilate the parliament, and destroy the city. This threat proved successful, and the parliament consented to withdraw its opposition.

The fact was no sooner promulgated, than the university issued an order that solemn services should be performed in the churches, and penitential processions traverse the streets, as on occasions of public calamity; while the parliament protested on oath that its liberties had been infringed, and that it had only yielded by compulsion to the will of the king. This done, the *Concordat* was eventually registered on the 16th of March, in the presence of M. de la Tremouille, with this final

clause, which was a last and useless protest against the act:—"By the very express command of the king several times repeated."

Nor was the opposition of the university less strongly demonstrated; the most popular preachers denounced the new law from their pulpits, and the most learned professors from their chairs. All the printers of the capital were forbidden to put the obnoxious document into type; and so intemperate were some of the speeches made by members of both bodies, and so gross the strictures passed upon the king and his court, that Francis at length found himself compelled to imprison several of the most distinguished of the orators, and to keep them in close confinement until the popular ferment had subsided; passing meanwhile an edict condemnatory of the proceedings of the whole university, whose members were forbidden under heavy penalties thenceforward to discuss this or any other decree which had received the royal sanction.

Thus the *Concordat* became a portion of the national law; but although all open opposition was necessarily at an end, it had to encounter evasions and quibbles so artfully conceived and skilfully executed, that Francis derived little benefit from its enforcement; while he was made painfully aware that by his pertinacity he had sacrificed his popularity, and estranged the affections of his people.

CHAPTER XI.

[1518.]

THE PROGRESS OF LITERATURE—LEONARDO DA VINCI—NATIVE TALENT—TACT OF FRANCIS—AN ITALIAN CHARLATAN—ERASMUS INVITED TO FRANCE—HE REFUSES TO LEAVE ENGLAND—CUPIDITY OF LEO X.—MARTIN LUTHER—INCREASING FAVOUR OF MADAME DE CHÂTEAUBRIAND—UNBOUNDED AUTHORITY OF LOUISE DE SAVOIE—ARROGANCE OF THE FRENCH KING—HIS PROFUSION—LAUTREC DISGUSTS THE MILANESE—THE MARÉCHAL TRIVULZIO—INTRIGUES OF THE FAVOURITE—TRIVULZIO IS DECLARED A TRAITOR—HE DEMANDS AN AUDIENCE OF THE KING—IS REFUSED, AND DIES BROKEN-HEARTED—THE VACANT BÂTON IS CONFERRED UPON M. DE LESCUN.

CHAPTER XI.

[1518.]

It has been already stated that the early studies of Francis I, however judiciously planned and admirably conceived, had failed to render him an accomplished scholar; but they had nevertheless taught him to estimate at their true value those more highly gifted than himself; and to render him eager to assemble about him all who were most distinguished in literature and art throughout Europe. Accordingly the Concordat was no sooner registered than he turned his attention to this important point; and the first celebrated man whom he invited to his court was Leonardo da Vinci, who had founded the schools of Florence and Milan; and through whom he entered into correspondence with the most famous architects of Italy, in order to secure their advice and assistance in the construction of the public monuments which he was anxious to erect. The Royal College, to which allusion has already been made, was, however, the principal object that occupied his mind. The encouragement afforded to literature by Louis XII, and the services rendered to oriental learning by the Greek *savant*

John Lascaris, during the same reign, had given an impetus to native talent, which had already produced most beneficial effects in the persons of Budée, Danés,[1] Du Chatel,[2] Cop,[3] and many other distinguished students; while the amiable and accomplished Etienne Poucher,[4] bishop of Paris, Guillaume Petit, Jacques Colin, Guillaume Pelissier, and several more individuals of equal reputation for talent and erudition, formed a nucleus worthy of the great names which ere long gathered about them from all the European nations. Gifted with extraordinary facility and a correct taste, Francis soon supplied, or rather concealed, his own mental deficiencies by the aptitude with

[1] Pierre Danés was born in Paris in 1497, was appointed by Francis I. professor of Greek at the Royal College, and became the tutor of many illustrious men. He was subsequently preceptor and confessor of the Dauphin, afterwards Francis II. Deputed to attend the Council of Trent in 1546, he produced a powerful effect by his extraordinary eloquence; and in 1557 was made bishop of Lavaur. He resigned his see in 1576, and died in 1577. He is believed to have been the author of the famous treatise, *De Ecclesiæ Ritibus*, published under the name of the president Duranti.

[2] Pierre Du Chatel, or *Castellanus*, one of the most learned prelates of the sixteenth century, was born at Arc-en-Barrois. He was reader and librarian to Francis I, who gave him the bishopric of Tulle in 1539, and that of Mâçon in 1544. Created great-almoner of France in 1548, he became bishop of Orleans in 1551, and died the following year. He was intimately versed in the oriental languages.

[3] Guillaume Cop was the most eminent physician of his time, and the original translator of the works of Galen, Paulus Æginetus, and Hippocrates.

[4] Etienne Poucher had been chancellor during the reign of Louis XII, but had voluntarily sent in his resignation. He subsequently became archbishop of Sens; and died in 1524, at the age of seventy-eight years.

which he appropriated the ideas of those about him; and as he passed every moment which was not devoted to Madame de Châteaubriand, or some one of her temporary rivals, in the society of the learned men who ere long thronged his court, and whom he skilfully and unwearicdly questioned upon the particular subjects for which they were especially celebrated, he succeeded in obtaining a vague and general idea of every branch of literature, which deluded the unlearned into a belief of his scholarship; while it even deceived himself sufficiently to persuade him that he could acquire by this erratic system of study all the results which had only been attained by his interlocutors through long and weary years of labour and application. That he had thoroughly convinced himself of so flattering a fact is rendered evident, by the *naïveté* with which he on one occasion remarked, while speaking of M. Du Chatel, "He is the only man the whole of whose science I have not fathomed in a couple of years."

As a natural consequence, the anxiety of Francis to attract about him all those celebrities by whose assistance he could either illustrate his reign, or increase his own slender stock of knowledge, exposed him to the artifices of many pretenders; and among the rest an anecdote is related by Alcyat[1] in one of his letters, of an Italian charlatan named Julio Camilla, who boasted to the monarch that he could render him a proficient both in

[1] André Alcyat was a celebrated lawyer, born near Milan, in 1492, and was invited to Bourges by Francis I, who was anxious to raise the character of the university of that city, where he introduced the system of combining the study of the law with that of polite literature. He was the author of several works of considerable talent; and died in 1550.

Greek and Latin in the short space of a single month, provided that he would devote an hour daily to that particular study. He, however, exacted that no third person should be present, declaring that so important a secret must be divulged only to crowned heads; while the remuneration which he claimed in the event of success, was a yearly income of two thousand crowns. Francis consented to these terms, and received the impostor alone in his cabinet; but having, before the close of the second lesson, satisfied himself of the audacious presumption and utter incompetency of his master, he ordered him to leave the palace, and never more to appear in his presence, a command which was promptly obeyed; and the more readily that, instead of punishing the offender, he presented him with the sum of six hundred crowns, "to remind him that he had been closeted with a king of France."

Other deceptions of a similar nature, to which he was occasionally exposed, did not, however, deter Francis from pursuing his great and laudable purpose. The object nearest his heart was still the foundation of the Royal College; and by the advice of Budée, whose modesty was as remarkable as his learning, he resolved to confide its direction to the celebrated Erasmus, who was universally recognised as the most erudite individual of the age. After having for a time adopted England as his country, where he had been entrusted with the education of the Prince of Wales, afterwards Henry VIII, Erasmus had made the tour of Italy, and resisted all the efforts of Jean de' Medici, subsequently Pope Leo X, to retain him in Florence; preferring to return to the land of his

predilection, which he declared to be the most advantageous and honourable sojourn for men of genius; but again wearying for change, he had ultimately taken up his abode in the Low Countries of which he was a native, and whither he had been invited by the princess-regent Marguerite, who was a zealous and liberal patron of letters.

Erasmus had been recently invested by his royal mistress with the dignity of honorary counsellor, when Francis I. decided upon offering him the presidentship of the Royal College through the medium of Budée, whom his brother student was accustomed to distinguish by the honourable appellation of "the prodigy of France;" and who was authorized to accede to the terms of the learned Hollander, even should they include a bishopric. Dazzling as such offers were, however, Erasmus requested time for reflection; and the negotiation extended over the space of eighteen months; a delay which increased the anxiety of the king to such a height, that he ultimately declared himself ready to subscribe to any conditions upon which Erasmus might insist.

Nevertheless, the offers of Francis were ultimately definitively, although respectfully, declined, with every becoming expression of gratitude for the distinction which had been conferred upon him, by the gratified scholar; who, it was ascertained, had determined, should he again leave the Low Countries, to return to England once more, where Henry VIII. was urging him, by offers as brilliant as those of Francis himself, to establish his permanent abode.

This disappointment, which had been utterly unfore-

seen by the French king, necessarily delayed the organization of the college; but more serious considerations diverted his mind for a time even from this engrossing project, and compelled him to turn his attention to a subject of more immediate and vital importance to the welfare of his kingdom.

The court of Rome having triumphed over the councils of Constance and Bâle, through the submission of the parliament and university of Paris, Leo X. hastened to profit by his advantage, and to degrade religion into a mere matter of financial speculation. Empoverished by his love of splendour and dissipation, and believing himself to be above all further opposition or worldly responsibility, he had authorized the mendicant monks of the order of St. Dominic to disperse themselves over all the nations of Christendom, and to remit sins for certain stipulated sums, as well as to announce certain indulgences from the pulpit, which were to be secured by the same venal means. As a natural consequence, his instructions were not only implicitly obeyed, but so perverted, through the anxiety of the community to find favour in his eyes by their success, that the people, scandalized by such an abuse of authority, revolted against what they justly considered as a violation of the most sacred privileges; and while the parliament of Paris and the wisdom of the Sorbonne alike continued passive; while the Council of the Lateran, having abdicated its authority, offered no protest against enormities which struck at the root of the religion they had been entrusted to uphold; and worldly prelates, sold to a corrupt and venal court, looked on unmoved; a nobler and a purer

spirit was aroused in an obscure class of the community, at which the proud sneered, and the powerful scoffed.

A poor monk of St. Augustin, the child of needy parents, himself vowed to poverty and privation, MARTIN LUTHER, already celebrated even in his comparative obscurity for the lucidity of his judgment, the extraordinary energy of his mind, and the unpretending piety of his character, scandalized at the dishonour brought upon the religion to which he had devoted himself, by the unblushing extortions of Leo X,—Luther, careless of the danger to which he was exposed by so hazardous a proceeding, first inveighed from the pulpit against the demoralizing and mischievous tendencies of these indiscriminate indulgences; and then, perceiving how little effect was produced upon the passions of his auditors, who were all, more or less, interested in securing for themselves what, despite their disgust, their old associations led them to believe were a guarantee of impunity for their misdeeds, he abandoned the pulpit for the desk; and with equal rapidity and skill composed no less than ninety-nine brief propositions, which he first read in the church of St. Wittemberg, and afterwards affixed to the door of the same church, inviting discussion, and declaring himself ready to maintain the position which he had assumed. He appealed to the authority of the Holy writings; he contrasted these with the fallible and interested testimony of human beings; and finally, with the eloquence of inspired truth, he called upon the people of Christendom to release themselves from the shackles of a superstition which degraded their most sacred associations, prostrated their most divine hopes,

and rendered them the slaves of a deception which they must hereafter expiate by an eternity of unmitigated and unmitigable repentance.

There can be no doubt that the objections thus suddenly and boldly advanced by

"The solitary monk who shook the world,"

had long been germinating in his mind, and were thus abruptly called forth by the exigencies of the moment which opened up an extraordinary opportunity for their demonstration. It is at least certain that they produced, under the force of existing circumstances, an effect tenfold greater than they could possibly have done at any preceding period. The reason of all, and the consciences of many, were offended by so open and undisguised an exhibition of papal profligacy; while the character, talents, and even defects of the reforming monk, secured for him a sympathy and an attention which gave weight and authority to his arguments. His impetuous and uncompromising spirit disdained all restraint, while his extraordinary and colloquial eloquence carried conviction with it. For a time, in all probability even himself unconscious of the extreme lengths to which his desire to abolish certain abuses must inevitably lead, he equally blinded his disciples to the fact that he was rapidly and surely undermining the foundations of that faith of which he had hitherto professed himself the humble follower; but, as in an ill-constructed edifice the removal of one prop loosens the tenure of the whole building, so did the energetic denunciations and objections of Luther, fed by the opposition which he experienced, shake the

entire fabric of Romanism to its very base; and as his capacious mind grasped the whole system of papal supremacy, he each hour discovered fresh reasons for a secession which changed the face of christian Europe, and was prolific of the most important results.

For a considerable time both the pope and the superior clergy regarded with contempt what they considered as the heretical but impotent endeavour of a vicious and powerless monk to reorganize the religious world; a mere ebullition of vanity and verbal licence which could be suppressed at any hour, but which might be more fittingly allowed to perish of its own insignificance in the little city which had witnessed its birth. They had miscalculated alike the nature and the talents of Martin Luther. Obstacles had no power to deter him from his purpose; contempt passed him by unheeded; conscious of a mighty mission, he despised the suffrages of the powerful; and still, in that quiet town, and within the hoary walls of its silent monastery, the work of God went on, to be emblazoned thereafter in characters of never-dying light.

Meanwhile, the favour of Madame de Châteaubriand continued unbounded, and she was recognised as the channel through which all court favour might the most readily be secured. Louise de Savoie was, it is true, still at the head of a party, who, aware of the volatile character of Francis, were confidently anticipating the early disgrace of the favourite; but although they secretly predicted, and even desired her downfall, they were not the less assiduous in their services. Her beauty, far from decreasing, appeared only to augment by time,

and the passion of the king kept pace with it. Her smile was a sufficient recompense for the greatest concession; and her wish was a law which he implicitly obeyed. Stern and unyielding towards his ministers, in her hands he was plastic as wax, and she moulded him to her pleasure. Her ambition, as a natural consequence, increased with her consciousness of power; and so completely did she contrive to thrall the reason of her royal lover, that although her *liaison* with Bonnivet had become notorious, and her advances to the Duke de Bourbon had long been a theme of sarcasm to the whole court, her influence over the infatuated monarch was stronger than ever.

Nevertheless, either from indolence, or from habit, Francis permitted his mother to take an active share in the affairs of government, and to treat with the legates and ambassadors who visited his court; her splendid person, insinuating manners, and powerful understanding, enabling her to bring to his councils the most efficient aid. Equally indulgent to her own social vices and to those of her son, she troubled him by none of those representations or reproaches of which he was so impatient; and he consequently felt for her a deferential affection which secured her lasting supremacy. The queen, who, on the 28th of February in the preceding year, had become the mother of a third daughter, having at length abandoned all hope of enjoying the domestic happiness to which she was so admirably constituted to contribute, had ceased to evince the slightest interest in the events which were taking place around her, and was seldom seen in public, save

on occasions of court-ceremonial; while the wily Duprat, anxious to maintain himself in the exalted post to which he had attained, encouraged the libertine propensities of the young king, and surrounded him with companions little calculated to enhance his moral character.

Francis had, at this period, reached his twenty-fourth year; and to his naturally dissipated tastes he added a supreme contempt for all classes of his subjects, save such as blindly lent themselves to his single will. He refused to assemble the States-General, or to recognise their right of opinion upon any public measure adopted by himself; nor would he suffer them to have a voice in the financial concerns of the kingdom. If Louis XIV, in the plenitude of his satisfaction upon finding himself King of France, was betrayed into the arrogance of exclaiming, "*L'Etát, c'est Moi!*" it is certain that the same sentiment had previously been stringently enacted by Francis I.

Nevertheless, however he might despise the opinions or the prejudices of his people, it is not the less certain that the young king avoided as much as possible any lengthened sojourn in the capital, where his immediate circle was exposed to the scrutiny and comments of the citizens; and, contenting himself by inhabiting the palace of the Tournelles during the winter months, he commonly spent the remainder of the year in travelling from castle to castle, accompanied by his whole court; generally selecting the western provinces; and issuing his orders in turn from Blois, Amboise, Ancenis, Verger, St. Germain-en-Laye, and even occasionally from some obscure hunting rendezvous.

The enormous outlay necessitated by this perpetual migration may be imagined, when it is stated that Francis exacted under all circumstances the same ceremonious magnificence; and according to Brantôme, his establishment exceeded all parallel; "nothing," says the quaint old chronicler, "could approach it; for there was his own table, that of the grand-master, that of the grand-chamberlain and chamberlains, of the gentlemen of the chamber, of the gentlemen on duty, of the *valets de chambre*, and many others; all so well provided that nothing was wanting; and what was most remarkable is, that in a village, or in the forests, or at a meeting, all were as well provided for as though they had been in Paris."

Nor was this the only species of profusion in which Francis indulged. Careless of the calamities which he caused by overwhelming his people with taxation, he was lavish of the money thus obtained to all by whom he was approached; and this to so extreme a degree, that the same writer from whom we have just quoted, proceeds to say: "Every one was astonished how he could sustain and furnish the outlay of such immense sums in war, and in gifts, above all to the ladies, for he made them great presents, and in such pomps, sumptuousnesses, magnificences, and superb buildings. No great weddings were celebrated at his court which were not solemnized either by tournaments, or combats, or masquerades, or rich vestments, both male and female, or suits of state liveries. I have seen the chests and wardrobes of some of the ladies of that period so full of dresses which the king had given to them at different fêtes and ceremonies, that they were a fine fortune of themselves."

It will be readily understood that it was not amid such a career as this that Francis was likely to recall to mind the duties which he owed to the people over whom he had been called to govern; or to disentangle himself from the shackles of an unholy attachment; yet, nevertheless, the favour of Madame de Châteaubriand, had it been less steadfastly founded, might have sustained a perilous shock from the unbridled arrogance of her brother, the Maréchal de Lautrec, who at this period had by his extortions and assumption so disgusted the Milanese as to create great discontent, and to aggravate their dislike to their conquerors to a pitch which threatened the most serious consequences. He had, moreover, given great umbrage to the court of Rome, by subjecting all ecclesiastical affairs to a species of military ordeal; while his demeanour towards the veteran Maréchal de Trivulzio, who had formerly held the government of Milan, and now shared it with himself, completed the exasperation of the people.

Trivulzio was descended, as we have elsewhere stated, from one of the noblest of the Lombard families, and had been induced to join the French army in order to assist in the extirpation of the tyrannical Ludovico Sforza: nor had his services ended there; for he had subsequently devoted himself to the interests both of Charles VIII. and Louis XII. with a valour and fidelity which was not exceeded by those of any of their own subjects. Age had, however, tamed his gallant spirit, and he had retired to Milan in order to pass the short remainder of his days amid the friends of his early years. Unfortunately, his universal popularity, and his great

wealth, which enabled him to maintain a magnificent style of living, offended the vanity and aroused the jealousy of Lautrec, who could not brook to see himself eclipsed upon the very theatre of his triumph; and who, finding himself powerless to injure the brave old man at his own hearth, could invent no other method of gratifying his selfish malice than that of representing him in his letters to the court as a dangerous and intriguing individual, who, profiting by his knowledge of the internal economy and resources of the French nation, had placed himself at the head of a faction hostile to the authority of Francis, which, should it be permitted to mature its plans, might endanger the tenure of the Milanese.

Urged on the one hand by the wishes of the pope to recal Lautrec from his government, and apprehensive on the other that, should his report of the defalcation of Trivulzio prove correct, he should be favouring the views of the disaffected portion of the duchy by removing the man who had detected their intrigue, Francis wavered. His irresolution was not, however, long fated to endure, for Madame de Châteaubriand was near him at all hours, to silence his doubts, to strengthen his decision, and to stifle his remorse. Lautrec triumphed; his acts of government were justified; and the grey-haired Trivulzio declared a traitor to his adopted country.

This accusation, uttered by Francis in a moment of passion, was soon communicated to the veteran maréchal; who, jealous of his honour, could not brook so foul an insult, but forgetting his age and his infirmities, (for he had attained his eighty-second year,) made immediate preparations for leaving Milan in order to justify himself

in person to the Sovereign by whom he had been so cruelly misjudged.

The summer was at its height; and, thus compelled to travel slowly alike from physical weakness and the sultriness of the season, it was not until the beginning of October that the heart-stricken old man reached Ancenis, where the court were then residing; but, worn and suffering as he was, he lost no time in soliciting an audience both of Francis and his mother. Madame d'Angoulême, who had personal reasons for siding with the Countess de Châteaubriand in this emergency, peremptorily refused to receive him; and although the king permitted his presentation, he simply addressed him with a few cold and civil words of welcome, and then turning upon his heel continued a conversation which the reception of the unwelcome visitor had apparently interrupted. Again and again did the veteran warrior entreat only to be heard; Francis was inexorable; and at length, finding that it was in vain to hope for a formal audience, and learning that the king was to pass on a certain day through the town of Arpajon, where he was then residing, Trivulzio being too much enfeebled to stand, caused himself to be carried in a chair to the centre of the street; and as Francis approached, addressed him with the noble and touching entreaty of—"Sire, condescend to listen for one moment to a man who has risked his life in seventeen battles for you and your ancestors."

Francis looked towards him for an instant, but the influence of Madame de Châteaubriand was too powerful; his better nature sank before it; and withdrawing his eyes, he passed on in silence.

"Sire! oh, sire! only one word;" again uttered the failing voice, but the king coldly pursued his way; and the wretched old man, throwing himself back into the arms of his attendants, suffered them to carry him once more to his bed, whence he never rose again. His heart was broken, and he had done with life. Francis was no sooner apprised that the brave old maréchal was dying, than a feeling of remorse for the harshness which he had displayed, awoke him to a sense of his own cruelty; and he despatched one of the gentlemen of his chamber to express his regret that he should have exhibited so much rigour to one who had so nobly served the French nation.

"I feel the kindness of the king;" said the expiring veteran; "but I have felt his harshness still more deeply. It is now too late."

In another hour he had breathed his last sigh; and nothing remained of the noble victim of a licentious woman, and an envious and unworthy rival, save the affecting epitaph which by his own direction was engraven upon his tomb: *J. J. Trivultius, Antonii filius, qui nunquam quievit, quiescit; tace!*

Whatever might have been the feelings of Francis when he learnt that the brave old soldier had ceased to exist, they were unable to resist the blandishments of the favourite; for, to the indignation of many who had fought beside Trivulzio, the bâton of maréchal which he had so long wielded with honour to himself and to the Sovereign whom he served, was bestowed upon Lescun, her second brother.

Truly vice was at a premium in France in the sixteenth century!

CHAPTER XII.

[1518.]

INCREASING POPULARITY OF CHARLES OF SPAIN—BONNIVET IS SENT ON A MISSION TO ENGLAND—A LEAGUE IS PROPOSED BY FRANCIS TO HENRY AGAINST THE TURKS—AND THE MARRIAGE OF THE INFANT DAUPHIN WITH THE PRINCESS MARY—THE RECEPTION OF THE EMBASSY AT THE COURT OF ENGLAND—BONNIVET SECURES THE INTEREST OF WOLSEY—FRANCIS ENTERS INTO A CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE CARDINAL—WOLSEY RESIGNS THE BISHOPRIC OF TOURNAY—SUSPICIONS OF HENRY VIII.—THE TREATY IS CONCLUDED—THE HOSTAGES—THE BETROTHAL AT ST. PAUL'S—THE FRENCH EMBASSY LEAVES ENGLAND—THE EARL OF WORCESTER ARRIVES IN FRANCE—RELUCTANCE OF THE EARL OF WORCESTER TO DELIVER UP THE CITY OF TOURNAY—INDIGNATION OF M. DE CHÂTILLON—THE BETROTHAL IS REPEATED AT ST. DENIS—THE AMBASSADORS LEAVE FRANCE—FRANCIS FORTIFIES TOURNAY AND TEROUENNE—THE FRENCH KING ENDEAVOURS TO CONCILIATE CHARLES OF CASTILE—THE TURKS THREATEN ITALY—FRANCIS DECLARES HIS INTENTION OF JOINING THE CRUSADE—DEATH OF THE SULTAN—CHARLES ASPIRES TO BE ELECTED EMPEROR OF GERMANY—RIVALRY OF CHARLES AND FRANCIS—MAXIMILIAN DEMANDS THE CROWN OF ROME—INTRIGUES OF LEO X.—CHIVALRIC DIPLOMACY—BONNIVET IS DESPATCHED TO FRANKFORT—PRECARIOUS POSITION OF GERMANY—DEATH OF MAXIMILIAN—ITS EFFECT UPON THE AFFAIRS OF EUROPE—FRANCIS BRIBES THE ELECTORAL PRINCES.

CHAPTER XII.

[1518.]

THE increasing power and popularity of Charles of Spain beginning about this period to awaken the apprehensions of the French king, he became anxious to secure the closer alliance of Henry VIII, whose defection from his interests would effectually have destroyed the balance of Europe, and involved the political ruin of France. Moreover, Henry was at best a doubtful ally under existing circumstances, for his jealousy of Francis was no secret, and his thirst for conquest rendered him a dangerous neighbour, possessed as he was of the strongly-fortified town of Tournay, which at all times afforded him easy ingress to the French territories.

Desirous at once to ransom the city, and to secure a more complete and satisfactory understanding with his brother-monarch, Francis accordingly despatched to England the friend of his childhood, Bonnivet, on whose good faith and zeal he implicitly relied; and upon whose insinuating manners and courtly tact he calculated to effect a purpose which might never have been accomplished through the ordinary medium of state diplomacy.

Conscious, moreover, of the vain and avaricious character of Wolsey, who had at this period become all-powerful with his royal master, Francis instructed his envoy to be profuse to the minister both in presents and promises before he ventured to open the negotiation on the subject of Tournay; and meanwhile to represent to Henry, as the object of his mission, his own desire to associate him with himself in the honourable privilege of forming a league for the preservation of Christendom from the Turks; who had in fact assumed an attitude which rendered such a precaution highly necessary. This effected, he was further authorized to propose a matrimonial alliance between the Dauphin, then an infant of only a few months old, and the princess Mary, the daughter of Henry; and above all to suffer no opportunity to escape of conciliating the haughty cardinal, without whose assistance Francis was fully aware that nothing satisfactory could be achieved; and whose personal pique against him was, as he also knew, sufficient of itself to bring about a war between the two nations.

The city of Tournay had remained in possession of the English since the Battle of the Spurs; but they could place little reliance upon its aid in the event of a frontier war, being highly unpopular with the inhabitants, and surrounded on all sides by both the French and the Flemish, who were equally interested in compelling them to vacate a fortress of that importance. Moreover, from its isolated position it was rendered useless, either for attack or defence; but, despite all these drawbacks, Wolsey had, nevertheless, caused himself to be appointed to its bishopric, and displaced for that purpose Louis Gaillart,

the prelate elected by the chapter of Tournay, who, on his demission, had retired to the court of France; greatly to the displeasure of the English cardinal, who considered himself aggrieved by the protection extended by Francis to an individual whom he had deposed.

The first clause of the mission was, as may be readily understood, a mere pretext for the introduction of the more important objects which the French king was eager to attain; for the pope, from the ridicule and disgust which he had brought upon religion by the indiscriminate and venal sale of indulgences before cited, had rendered the success of an European league for such a purpose as a crusade almost impossible; and in selecting Francis as the Sovereign by whom it was to be organized, he had been only actuated by a desire to arouse the romance of his nature, and to induce him to absent himself for a time from his own dominions.

Bonnivet, so soon as he was fully apprised of the wishes of his royal master, did not lose an instant in endeavouring to conciliate the English cardinal; whom he assured, in the letter by which he announced to him his intended visit to the court of Henry, that the regret felt by the French king at the recent misapprehensions on the subject of the Duke d'Aubigny and the ex-Bishop of Tournay, by which he had lost the confidence of so distinguished a person as His Eminence, exceeded all bounds; adding, that he trusted, when he should have the honour of a conference, that all would be explained to his satisfaction; and that he would restore to the French monarch a friendship which he highly valued.

Wolsey, flattered by these overtures, returned a courteous reply; and immediate preparations were made for

the departure of the embassy, which was one of exceeding magnificence.

Not only did it comprise Bonnivet himself, and a number of great nobles and members of the council, but also Gouffier de Boisy, and Poncher, bishop of Paris, all superbly appointed; and attended by so enormous a suite, that on their arrival at Greenwich where the court were then sojourning, on the 30th of September, their appearance created to the full as much astonishment as admiration.

Their reception even exceeded their hopes. The social qualities of Bonnivet, the calm judgment of Boisy, and the meek dignity of the metropolitan bishop, alike produced their effect; and Henry and his minister emulated each other in their efforts to render the sojourn of the embassy in England a period of unalloyed satisfaction. Every amusement which could be devised was put into requisition; banquets, tournays, balls, hunting-parties, tiltings at the ring, and all the various sports peculiar to the age and nation, alternately occupied the time and gratified the tastes of the courtly guests; and amid all this dissipation Bonnivet was busily and skilfully employed in advancing the interests of his Sovereign.

Respectful and earnest with the king himself, he became obsequious and almost affectionate with Wolsey, whom he justly considered as the actual monarch of the country; and accordingly the cardinal, whose vanity was flattered by the distinction, and to whom it immediately became apparent, grew daily more attached to the society of the French ambassador, and more anxious to favour his views. All, consequently, progressed to the entire

satisfaction of Bonnivet, who lost no opportunity o vaunting the liberality and accomplishments of his young monarch, and at the same time of impressing upon the cardinal the weight which he attached to the good opinion and admirable counsels of so great a minister. Wolsey listened so greedily to these perpetual plaudits, uttered as they were, sometimes in the deep bay of a window during the intervals of a dance; sometimes in his barge, as the indefatigable envoy accompanied him to Westminster; and sometimes in the quiet shades of Hampton, where the cardinal was then erecting the famous palace which outvied in its time those of royalty itself, and expatiating to his attentive listener upon the architectural glories which he meditated; that at length Bonnivet ventured to hint how anxiously his sovereign desired the advice and assistance of His Eminence upon a subject in which he was deeply interested.

After a little diplomatic coquetry, Wolsey declared himself ready to aid the French king in any way not inconsistent with his duty to his own monarch; upon which the ambassador entreated him to place himself in direct correspondence with Francis, who would, as a natural consequence, express himself more confidentially to His Eminence through such a medium, than he could condescend to do through any third person, however trustworthy. This was, after a time, also conceded; and forthwith letters were exchanged between the French king and the English cardinal which soon tended to secure the interests of Francis; although all was so skilfully contrived that Wolsey was enabled to communicate each missive as it reached his hands to Henry himself; who, as he read

the earnest appeals made by his brother-monarch to his own minister for advice and support, laughingly remarked that His Eminence must indeed be an extraordinary person if he could contrive to govern two kingdoms at the same time; but that he personally entertained no doubt of his capability even for such an undertaking, difficult and onerous as it was.

Meanwhile the letters of Francis were accompanied by the most costly gifts, to which Bonnivet affected to attach no importance, assuring the gratified cardinal, that, should he continue his good offices to France, its sovereign would know how to recompense them in a far more efficient manner. The united flattery of the young king and his envoy proved irresistible; and at length Wolsey was induced to listen to the proposition with which Bonnivet was charged; and not only agreed to exchange his distant and unproductive bishopric of Tournay for a life-pension of twelve thousand livres, but, in return for this munificence, also to exert all his influence over the mind of Henry to induce him to accede both to this arrangement, and likewise to the alliance proposed by Francis.

These preliminaries having been privately adjusted, Wolsey forthwith began to recant all his former arguments upon the importance of retaining the city of Tournay; and represented to the king, that, upon mature reflection, he had arrived at the conclusion that the immense outlay necessitated by the support of a strong garrison in so isolated a position, more than counterbalanced the contingent advantages to be derived from its possession; its distance from Calais, in the event of a rupture between the two nations, rendering it impossible

to defend it, when it must eventually be lost to England, either through force or famine. He therefore strenuously advised Henry to accept the offers of Francis, who had proposed to purchase back from the English crown Tournay, Mortaigne, and Saint Amand, at the enormous sum of six hundred thousand crowns of gold, payable in twelve years; and to deliver into his keeping four gentlemen of his chamber and four of the royal pages as hostages, until the whole amount should be liquidated.

As the king, only half convinced, and somewhat startled by this sudden change in the opinion of his minister, still hesitated, Wolsey reminded him that, should he refuse to lend himself to the wishes of Francis upon this point, the French monarch would in all probability recant his offer of the hand of the dauphin; which was, with the sole exception of that of Charles of Spain, the only alliance worthy of the Princess of England; and that, moreover, Henry might deduct whatever should remain unpaid at the period of the marriage from the dowry of the bride, with whom the sum of three hundred and thirty-three thousand crowns had been demanded. He also expatiated earnestly upon the immense advantages which must accrue to England from a marriage which would strengthen the friendship already existing between the two nations, and enable them to oppose the increasing power of the house of Austria; which being already possessed not only of the Empire, but also of Spain, the Low Countries, and the kingdoms of Naples and Sicily, was rapidly assuming an attitude that threatened the peace of Europe, and the independence of individual nations.

After some slight objections on the part of Henry VIII. which were ultimately overruled by the arguments of the cardinal and the representations of the French ambassador, the treaty was definitively concluded; and Bonnivet bound himself to deliver into the hands of the English monarch the promised pledges, in the persons of François de Montmorency, Seigneur de la Rochefort, Charles de Mouy, Seigneur de la Meilleraye, Antoine des Prés, Seigneur de Montpesat, and Charles de Souliers, Seigneur de Morette in Piedmont; as well as the four pages of the presence, one of whom was the elder son of the Seigneur de Hugueville, the younger representative of the family of Mortemart; and of the three remaining two were scions of the noble houses of Melun and Grimault. These important measures had been accomplished in the short period of six weeks; and at the termination of that time, the ceremony of the betrothal was performed on the part of the princess in the cathedral of St. Paul's, where the English and French nobility vied with each other in magnificence, and the most lavish protestations of friendship were exchanged.[1]

The leave-taking followed; and with the same pompous retinue as they had landed, the ambassadors of Francis quitted the shores of England, amid the acclamations of the dazzled multitude.

Shortly afterwards Henry despatched, in his turn, the Earl of Worcester, the Bishop of Ely, Lord St. John, Sir Nicholas Vaux, Sir John Pechy, Sir Thomas Boleyn, and a retinue rivalling that of Bonnivet, to Paris; as

[1] The treaty of marriage between the two royal children was signed in London on the 14th of October, 1518.

witnesses to the corresponding ceremony on the part of the dauphin, which was celebrated with equal grandeur in the metropolitan church of Notre Dame; and at the same time to receive the hostages, and to deliver up the city of Tournay, according to the stipulations of the treaty. The mission was an ungracious one to the earl, who had been present at the taking of Tournay, and saw with regret so brilliant a trophy once more lost to England; nor would he consent to yield up the city until Gaspard de Coligny, Duke de Châtillon and Maréchal of France, who had been despatched with a body of two hundred men-at-arms to take possession, transmitted to him his authority to receive it, together with a written acknowledgment, that he claimed the place not as a right, but as a gift; a demand which excited much indignation among the French officers.

Nevertheless, fearful of incurring the displeasure of Francis, they resolved to comply; and, accordingly, the required documents were delivered to the earl on the following morning; and Châtillon no sooner ascertained that they had reached his hands, than he advanced at the head of his troop with drums beating and colours flying, in order to make a triumphant entry into the citadel. To this arrangement, however, the English earl, already sufficiently chafed by the cession of the city, would by no means consent; and he immediately despatched a gentleman-at-arms to the quarters of the maréchal, declaring that, as the city had neither yielded nor been taken, but simply transferred by a marriage treaty, he could not consent to suffer that it should be entered after the fashion of conquerors; and that the

banners which had been so prematurely displayed must be furled before he would permit the French troops to pass the gates.

This new affront was ill brooked by M. de Châtillon and his captains; but once more they found themselves compelled to submit; the obnoxious standards were covered, and they marched forward "with drums and minstrelsy" to the walls, where they were met by the Earl of Worcester and his companions; the papers which they had transmitted to him read aloud; and possession of the town, and citadel, together with all the artillery and ammunition that it contained, formally delivered over to them; after which the English nobles took their departure for Paris, to be present at the second ceremony of affiance.

They reached the capital at the commencement of December; and such was the anxiety evinced both by Louise de Savoie and her son to secure the goodwill of Henry VIII. that no seduction was spared in order to induce them to prolong their stay. The most beautiful women of the court were their constant companions; and festival succeeded festival with a rapidity which left them little time to devote to public business. The most superb horses and the richest jewels were profusely distributed among the nobles, while their followers were regaled with equal magnificence. At length, however, they were compelled to take their leave; and Francis had once again leisure to turn his attention to more important objects.

His first care was to restore the fortresses of Tournay and Terouenne, which latter had been destroyed by the

English in 1513, to their original state of defence; and to increase the strength of the fortifications of Havre; while he was no less anxious to conciliate the pope and the King of Castile than he had been to secure the alliance of Henry VIII. Even Lorenzo de' Medici was not overlooked; and Francis so far committed himself as to promise his assistance, should it be required, in any future attempt which the Florentine might make to augment his territories, notwithstanding that he had already unjustly possessed himself of the duchy of Urbino. The death of this prince in the following year, however, released the monarch from so dishonourable a compact.

The pope conciliated, Maximilian for a time at least powerless, and the alliance of Henry VIII. secured by the betrothal of the dauphin to his daughter, neither Francis nor his mother spared any pains to win the friendship and confidence of Charles of Castile, even while they were secretly engaged in frustrating his schemes of ambition. The Princess Louise, to whom he had been betrothed, had died in her third year; thus a link was broken which they were desirous to renew; and in order to effect this, they proposed to him her sister Charlotte, who was still an infant; while, impossible as it was to speculate upon a marriage which could not possibly take place for many years, Francis still persisted, in order to keep up the illusion, in addressing Charles as his son-in-law; and in overwhelming him with professions of regard and affection, which were intended to blind him to the efforts that he was in reality making to curb his power, and to counteract his projects.

Meanwhile the young king had not forgotten the mission with which he had been intrusted by the pope, and in which he had urged Henry VIII. to participate; although there can be little doubt that neither the one nor the other, when they professed themselves willing to undertake the expedition, was prepared to redeem his pledge. It was true that Selim, the reigning sultan, was equipping a prodigious naval force on the coast opposite Otranto; and that should the Moslem, newly flushed as they were with conquest, turn their arms against Italy or Germany, those countries might become an easy prey, and all Christendom in its turn be threatened; but at this precise crisis it was rather the pope himself and Maximilian who were in jeopardy than either Francis or Henry, both of whom were more apprehensive of the European enemy beyond their frontier than of the infidel who might never dream of invading their territories.

Nevertheless, the French king considered it expedient as a measure of policy, to declare himself ready to redeem his word; and accordingly, on the 6th of December, 1518, he convoked an assembly of all the princes of the blood, the marshals of France, the captains of his army, the grand council, and the presidents of Paris, and announced his intention of joining the crusade. He also caused prayers to be offered up in the Churches; and despatched information of his design to the emperor, and the kings of England and Castile; but although the whole nation were aware that the project had been pending for a considerable period, and that it was the result of a long negotiation with the sovereign-pontiff, this demonstration created little sensation in France, as a

general conviction was felt that it would never be carried into execution. A few hot-headed young men, weary of inaction, volunteered to join the crusading army, but their enthusiasm met with no serious response; and the death of Selim, which occurred before any steps had been taken to commence the expedition, at once put an end to the enterprise.

Meanwhile, Charles of Castile was not idle. The health of Maximilian, his grandfather, was failing, and he aspired to succeed him as emperor of Germany. For several years Maximilian, ever needy, had been endeavouring to extort money both from Francis and Henry VIII. by an offer to transfer to them what he somewhat questionably denominated his claims on Italy; and which consisted simply in a project that he had mentally formed of uniting all the states of that country and Germany under one sovereign. His demands were of course disregarded; and he was consequently irritated against both monarchs, and readily induced to favour the views of his ambitious grandson. As a preliminary measure, Charles had applied to the pontiff for a grant of the investiture of Naples, of which Leo X. claimed to be the feudal sovereign; and not content with this attempt, had also prayed to be recognised as King of the Romans; while Maximilian, who was anxious to secure to him the empire of Germany, in his turn negotiated with the electors,[1] many of whom promised him their votes; but a legal impediment rendered the election one

[1] These electors were Albert de Brandebourg, Archbishop of Mayence; Hermand, Count de Vied, and Archbishop of Cologne; Richard de Greiffenklau, Archbishop of Trèves; Louis, King of Bohemia; Louis, Count-Palatine of the Rhine; Frederic, Duke de

of considerable difficulty, a circumstance of which the pope skilfully availed himself. He had lost no time in apprising Francis of the requirements of Charles, and the jealousy of the French king being immediately aroused, he had urged the pontiff to withhold his compliance; and not, by an ill-placed condescension, to peril the safety of the holy see; reminding him that as Maximilian had never received the imperial crown in Rome, he could claim no higher title than that of King of the Romans; while he should have been crowned emperor, before, according to the Germanic constitution, he could assume a right to call upon the electors to recognise his presumptive heir as successor to the empire. Moreover, as he adduced, the grandson of Maximilian was king of the Two Sicilies; and by the decrees of the church, which had existed in full vigour during two centuries and a half, the crown of the empire and that of Naples could not lawfully be united on the same head.

The pope replied to the application of Charles by representing these impediments, which he declared to be insuperable; but the young King of Spain was as pertinacious as his rival, and urged the emperor to announce to the court of Rome that his election was secured in Germany; and to request from the sovereign-pontiff a dispensation which would set aside the constitutions of the church. Francis, however, denied that such was the case, declaring that Charles had not been elected, and never would be so; and that, moreover, he had been

Saxe, surnamed the Wise; and Joachim, Marquis de Brandebourg. The Archbishop of Mayence was in favour of Charles, while the prelate of Trèves defended the interests of Francis.

himself urged to advance his own pretensions to the contested dignity; and he therefore in his turn prayed His Holiness to be cautious how he endangered the permanent interests of the church by setting aside her decrees, which had not only been the result of profound wisdom, but had now become doubly sacred from their antiquity.

Maximilian then pressed the pope to send the imperial crown to Vienna by a nuncio, authorized by his holiness to perform the ceremonial of his coronation; while Charles was betrayed into the injudicious measure of endeavouring to engage the French king to use his interest with Leo to induce him to consent to this arrangement; a request which was necessarily evaded by Francis, who counselled the pontiff to decline a measure which tended to lower the dignity of the holy see; and to propose that Maximilian should proceed to Rome to receive the crown of empire from his own sacred hands.

"Let His Holiness," he added to the legate, "be under no apprehension, for assuredly he will not undertake such a journey without being well guarded; and if he were even able to perform it at the head of an army, which is not probable, still let His Holiness remain passive, and allow the King of France to act; for as Maximilian will be compelled to traverse the territories of Milan or Venice, the king will immediately pass into Italy to protect his possessions, and so well accompanied that he will pledge himself that Maximilian shall not reach Rome, but will be satisfied to retrace his steps."

Leo X, however, could not overcome his reluctance to venture on so hazardous an experiment; and it would

appear from a letter of the Cardidal de Bibbiena, that he had already prepared a bull by which Charles was authorized to unite the imperial crown with that of Sicily, although he concealed the fact carefully from Francis until the result of the election should be declared. Moreover, he laboured assiduously to dissuade the French king from advancing his claim to the empire; declaring that the interests of Europe would be better secured were some petty German prince invested with this high sounding title than the monarch of so powerful a nation as France; and reminding him that Henry VIII, who had originally expressed his resolution of contesting the dignity, had already abandoned the project.

In the first instance Francis had opposed the King of Spain with an apparent frankness and generosity which were consistent with his reputation for chivalry; declaring that the contest need in no degree affect the regard which subsisted between Charles and himself, but that, on the contrary, they had only to consider themselves in the same position as two young cavaliers, who, enamoured of the same mistress, even while using their best efforts to win her favour, avoided all occasion of quarrel, and continued true and loyal friends. It was impossible, however, that so momentous a struggle could be carried on without bitterness: the very consciousness which existed on both sides, that each was strenuously labouring to undermine the interests of the other, rendered such an attempt incompatible; and while Charles was urging his grandfather to undertake the journey to Rome, and thus to remove one of the most serious objections of the pope to his own succession, Francis

despatched Bonnivet, whose successful embassy to England had inspired him with the most perfect confidence in his diplomatic talents, in disguise to Frankfort, with large sums of money, to purchase the votes of such of the electors as had not yet declared in his favour. Bonnivet was subsequently followed by the Marquis de Fleuranges, and the Seigneur Albret d'Orval, who were also commissioned to forward by every means in their power the interests of their sovereign; but neither of these envoys acted with sufficient circumspection; and all their proceedings were immediately known and thwarted by Charles, whose early habits of caution and prescience had rendered him a formidable antagonist to inferior diplomatists. Moreover, the position of Germany was at that moment extremely critical; the attitude of the Turks was still hostile; and the nation was beginning to feel the shock of a mighty religious schism. Thus menaced both externally and internally, she required a prince whose firmness and power might enable her not only to maintain herself, but also to recover from the prostration to which she had been subjected by the wavering and imbecile rule of Maximilian; who, full of great projects, none of which he ever accomplished, had, by his inordinate vanity and thirst for a renown which he was utterly incapable of acquiring, by his uncalculating love of splendour, and his absurd pretensions, only succeeded in rendering the first monarchy in Christendom both helpless and insignificant.

The two rival sovereigns were, it is true, alike brave and powerful; but Charles had in this contest the advantage of his German extraction, his intimate acquaintance with the

principles of the Germanic constitution, and a stability of character which, unlike the volatile nature of Francis, inspired at once respect and confidence.

Thus were matters situated, when the sudden and unexpected death of Maximilian, at Lintz upon the Danube, on the 15th of January, 1519, from fatigue and repletion, at the age of sixty-three years, gave a new impetus to the exertions of the contending potentates. "His death," says Fleuranges in his memoirs, with a *bonhommie* which is irresistible; "was a great pity, as he was a good prince, and kept all Christendom awake; for when he could not accomplish anything himself, he showed the way to other people, and therefore, all fighting men ought to grieve at his death." One circumstance connected with his decease is worthy of mention. During the last four years of his existence he had caused a large and heavy chest to be carried with him wherever he went, and despite his improvident habits there were those about him who fully expected one day to reap a rich harvest from its contents, never doubting that it was freighted with treasure. He had no sooner expired, however, than the illusion was dispelled by the discovery that it was simply his coffin, which he had thus prepared against an emergency that he foresaw must soon occur.

His demise was fated to exert an influence over the destinies of Europe which no action of his life had been able to elicit. Henry VIII. had, as we have already stated, withdrawn from the contest for empire, to which he had been originally urged by Maximilian himself, who, forgetting all other interests in the old hatred which he bore to France, had even offered to resign his

own claim to the imperial crown, if the English king would possess himself of Milan, and then accompany him to Rome to receive it. It is asserted that Henry subsequently repented the prudence which had led him to decline this offer, from a distrust not only of the sincerity, but also of the stability of Maximilian, whose magnificent beginnings generally ended in failure; and that he would willingly, when it was too late, have recanted his resolution. The delay had, however, been fatal to him; he could neither compete with the policy of Charles, nor with the gold of Francis, who had distributed the enormous sum of four hundred thousand crowns among the electoral princes through the medium of his agents; and Henry accordingly remained neuter.

CHAPTER XIII.

[1519.]

A STRUGGLE FOR EMPIRE—CONTRAST BETWEEN CHARLES AND FRANCIS—ABLE GOVERNMENT OF THE CARDINAL XIMÈNÉS—HE IS DISPLACED, AND DIES—THE GERMANS FAVOUR THE PRETENSIONS OF FRANCIS—TERGIVERSATION OF THE POPE—DUPLICITY OF HENRY VIII.—SUPINENESS OF THE PETTY PRINCES—WILY POLICY OF CHARLES—GERMAINE DE FOIX—FRANCIS OFFENDS THE PREJUDICES OF THE FLEMISH—ROBERT DE LA MARK—SECKINGEN—HIS INTRODUCTION TO THE FRENCH KING—MUTUAL MISGIVINGS—THE DUKE DE GUELDRES IS DISGRACED AT THE INSTIGATION OF LOUISE DE SAVOIE—HER DOUBLE-DEALING—M. DE LA MARK AND THE BISHOP OF LIÈGE JOIN THE CAUSE OF CHARLES—DISGUST OF SECKINGEN—HE JOINS THE PRINCES OF BOUILLON—CHARLES OF AUSTRIA ATTACKS THE TURKISH GALLEYS.

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CHARLES V.

CHAPTER XIII.

[1519.]

Thus the struggle was entirely between the sovereigns of France and Spain; and, perhaps, two monarchs more dissimilar both in physical and moral attributes could not have placed themselves in competition. Francis, full of ambition, courage, and enthusiasm, gifted by nature with a person of remarkable majesty and beauty, had already won a reputation for valour which had become European. Moreover, he had been eminently successful in all his undertakings, had encouraged literature, had patronised art, and had, by his extraordinary munificence, blinded the multitude to those defects in his character which were a source of uneasiness to the more reflective portion of his subjects.

Charles, on the contrary, was cold and phlegmatic, prudent, and calculating. Born and educated in Flanders, he was almost entirely a stranger to the electors, with whom he had made no effort to ally himself since his accession to the Spanish crown; as a soldier he was utterly unknown; and his diplomacy had as yet been

limited to mere self-security. In person he was insignificant and unprepossessing. Of middle height and weak health, he possessed no energy either of voice or gesture, his under lip was heavy and pendant, his eyes cold and colourless, his face long, and melancholy in its expression; and nothing in his appearance tended to reveal the extent of that genius, and strength of character, by which he was subsequently distinguished. Unable, even as king of Spain, to liberate himself from the yoke of his governor, M. de Chièvres, and accustomed to obey implicitly all his directions, he had so thoroughly abnegated his own powers of volition that his subjects already began to look upon him with disdain and distrust; and to murmur among themselves that the malady of his mother, (*Jeanne la Folle*,) was hereditary. During the year which succeeded the treaty of Noyon, he had entirely absented himself from Spain; nor had he visited Austria until September, 1517, as he shrank from encountering the Cardinal Ximènés, who first recovered, and then had established order and obedience throughout these kingdoms in the short space of twenty months; and had even, at the instigation of M. de Chièvres, written to him coldly and ungraciously, advising him to retire to his diocese, and repose himself after the labour of his administration.

The aged cardinal, whose health was already broken, died on the very day upon which the letter reached him (the 8th Nov. 1517), although not, as some historians declare, by fair means. This event aroused the indignation of the Spaniards, whose respect and attachment for their primate had been extreme; nor was their irritation lessened by the fact, that his vacant arch-

bishopric of Toledo was bestowed upon a nephew of M. de Chièvres, who was still a youth. Other causes of dissatisfaction had also arisen; and Castile, Aragon, Catalonia, and Valencia, alike continued to dispute his claim to the sovereignty; while several of the free towns formed a coalition to resist by force of arms the usurpation of his Flemish advisers; and these were still at Barcelona, engaged in opposing the Cortes of Catalonia, who had at length consented to recognise him as joint-sovereign with his mother, when the imperial electors assembled at Frankfort to decide the question of the Germanic succession.

Nothing, therefore, under such circumstances as these, was likely to induce the Germans to elect as their emperor a youth who had shown so little inclination to conciliate the subjects over whom he already ruled, and who had exhibited such marked contempt for their national rights and prejudices; while, on the other hand, Francis, as sovereign of the kingdom of Arles and the duchy of Milan, was already a member of the empire, popular in his own country, and cited throughout Europe as a model of chivalry and justice.

It is not, consequently, matter of surprise, that the French king looked forward to a signal triumph over his unprepossessing rival; or that he should be sufficiently unguarded to betray the confidence that he felt. Moreover, he trusted, and not without reason, to the effect of the enormous sums which he had caused to be distributed among the electors; and which, from the poverty of some, and the rapacity of others, had been unhesitatingly accepted.

It was not, however, according to Fleuranges, with money only that the French envoys were indiscreet enough to pursue their purpose; for while they were scattering gold on all sides, and backing it by promises which were forgotten as soon as uttered, they also gave magnificent banquets to the German nobility, where the greatest excesses were encouraged; and ultimately, in order to intimidate the electors, they contemplated taking into their pay the army of the confederated cities of Suabia; but in this latter resolution the wary and calculating Charles had already forestalled them.

While the electors were preparing to assemble at the diet which was to decide the future destinies of Europe, neither of the candidates were idle. In reply to an application to the pope for his support, Francis received from the wily pontiff the warmest protestations of gratitude and attachment; while he skilfully contrived to evade any pledge by which he might be compromised; and occupied himself in undermining the interests of both sovereigns, in the hope that the imperial crown might devolve to some less powerful prince, from whose ambition Italy would have nothing to apprehend. From Henry VIII. the French king experienced even greater duplicity; for while he unequivocally promised him his support, he secretly gave it to his adversary. With the King of Poland he had no better success, that sovereign frankly declaring that he should adopt the views of Louis of Hungary, who at once expressed his intention of supporting the claims of Charles of Castile; while the other powers of Europe, who had no personal or political interest in either candidate, forgetting the importance of

which such an event must necessarily prove to the future interests of their respective kingdoms, declined to involve themselves in the responsibility of declaring their sentiments. Meanwhile, Charles, with less ostentation, was silently and incessantly occupied in strengthening his party; and quietly profiting by every false move into which his adversary was betrayed. One of these, and that a fatal one, enabled him to advance his interests in an unlooked-for manner.

Germaine de Foix, the Dowager-Queen of Spain, and niece of Louis XII, wearied by the neglect and insignificance to which she was condemned, and apprehensive that, on the return of Charles to his dominions, she should be subjected to still greater annoyance, from the fact that, being childless, her death would revive the claim of France to the kingdom of Naples; had addressed letters both to Madame d'Angoulême and her son, entreating them to afford her their protection in the event of her apprehensions proving well founded. These overtures had been coldly received; Louise de Savoie, whose pride could ill brook the necessity of yielding precedence even to her daughter-in-law, at once opposing the return of Ferdinand's widow to France, which she foresaw would be the result, should any such pledge be given on the part of Francis. Not only, indeed, was her pride involved in the question, but also her vanity; for she had not forgotten that the favourite niece of Louis XII. had been one of the handsomest women of the court, and was many years her junior. To Francis himself, the subject was altogether uninteresting: he did not calculate upon the advantage which might accrue to Charles, should he

profit by this supineness; and accordingly, by the advice of his mother, very discouraging answers were returned to the dowager-queen, who became at length so impatient of the ceremonious restraints of Spanish etiquette, and the solitude of a court devoid alike of splendour and amusement, that her temper gave way before her disappointment; and even to the French ambassador she permitted herself to speak in the most unmeasured terms of the selfishness and bad feeling of the monarch and his mother, in thus forgetting that she was a princess of France, and their own kinswoman.

In so rigid a court as that of Spain, not a word could be uttered by a person of her rank which was not overheard and registered; and accordingly, Charles was soon informed of the irritation of the offended queen against Francis and his mother, as well as her weariness of the restraints to which she was subjected; when, delighted at once to secure her good will, and to further his personal views, he lost no time either in surrounding her with attention, or in presenting to her such individuals as were at once able to advance his own fortune, and to interest her feelings; and consequently it was not long ere he succeeded in negotiating a marriage between herself and Casimir, Marquis de Brandebourg, the brother of the Elector Joachim, and of the Bishop of Mayence, whose suffrages were thus secured to him in the diet.

In the Low Countries Francis had also suffered his popularity to become diminished by the impolitic measures that he had adopted towards the recovered city of Tournay; which, entirely surrounded by the territories

of Charles of Austria, had so long maintained its fidelity to France, simply from the fact that the preceding sovereigns had never sought to interfere with its form of government, which was that of a free republican city. Their authority recognised by the payment of an annual tribute, they had neither interfered in its internal administration, nor garrisoned the citadel, but had recognised, as their own lieutenants, the municipal officers chosen by the citizens; whereas, Francis had no sooner become master of the city, than he refused to confirm the ancient privileges, which, according to his view of the subject, rendered its inhabitants too independent of his own authority, although they had been respected even by the English, who, as conquerors, might have been excused had they disregarded them. The natural consequence ensued; a considerable number of the citizens emigrated, feeling that their commercial interests must suffer from the restraints imposed upon their transactions; while the operative classes, thus deprived of the means of existence formerly secured by their industry, did not submit without murmurs to the new thrall by which they were impoverished; and although the constant and novel presence of an armed force compelled them to assume a semblance of submission, they were all ready to cast off the yoke of France upon the first opportunity which might present itself; and, adds a quaint old chronicler: "*Many a tall yoman that lacked livying fel to robyng, which would not labor after their return.*"

Unfortunately this was not the only piece of bad policy of which Francis was guilty in the same province; for it

was not long ere he alienated from his interests the brave Robert de la Mark, the sovereign prince of Bouillon and Sedan, and duke de Gueldres, who, it may be remembered, did such good service at Novara; and, together with his valiant sons Fleruanges and Jamets, levied and organized the lansquenets who superseded the Swiss mercenaries in the armies of both Louis XII. and Francis himself.

Nor was the house of La Mark distinguished only in the field, having given several prelates to the see of Liège; while Evrard, the younger brother of Robert, still held the bishopric of that city, whose spiritual government he had directed since the year 1506. Moreover, the Marquis de Fleuranges, who had been one of the favourite companions of Francis in his youth, was still actively employed in his service, and entirely devoted to his interests; and his brother, the Seigneur de Jamets, filled an important post in the royal army.

While levying the troops above-mentioned, M. de la Mark had formed a close intimacy with François de Seckingen, a German adventurer who had acquired a great reputation and considerable influence throughout the empire; and by whose assistance he was enabled to secure the services of the before-named troops to the French cause. Seckingen was one of those extraordinary men who occasionally appear like landmarks, to point out the path of fame to less gifted and enterprising natures. Of somewhat obscure family, and small fortune, but possessed of indomitable energy and the most seductive manners, he had succeeded in rendering himself popular with many of the petty princes of Germany, some of whom

occasionally afforded him very efficient assistance in time of need. Although not a soldier by profession, he was enthusiastically attached to the pursuit of arms; and had organized a small force, with which he carried on an irregular but harassing war against the emperor, and such of the minor states as had neglected or refused to secure his alliance. The very *beau-ideal* of a knight of romance, he was no sooner seen in one place than he was heard of at another many leagues distant; and while he was believed to be at one extremity of the empire, he made an attack upon some hostile sovereign at the other. The Duke de Lorraine, the citizens of Metz, and the Landgrave of Hesse[1] alike incurred his displeasure, and were each compelled to purchase his forbearance by a heavy tribute; the former, moreover, not only in ready money, but by a life-pension of five hundred florins; while so great was the influence of his good fortune, which attracted to his standard many of the bravest youths of Germany, that the Duke de Gueldres had at length advised Francis if possible to attach him to his own interests, no individual throughout the empire being enabled to render to France services of equal value.

The proposition had been at once accepted, and the duke was requested to bring him to Amboise with all possible courtesy and honour, and to present him in person to the French king; while Seckingen, whose attachment to Robert de la Mark was as warm as that of a brother, no sooner ascertained that the duke was

[1] Philippe de Hesse, who subsequently embraced the Lutheran faith, and took a prominent part in the religious troubles of Germany.

anxious to effect the alliance, than he hastened to Sedan, accompanied by twelve German gentlemen of his troop, and declared himself ready to espouse the interests of Francis.

Little time was lost in commencing the journey; and as full powers had been given to M. de la Mark to effect it in any manner likely to prove agreeable to his companion, he added his son Fleuranges to the party, and proceeded by Château-Thierry and other fine cities towards the capital, in order to impress the adventurer with a becoming wonder and admiration of the great kingdom of which he was about to become the ally.

On his arrival at Amboise, Seckingen was at once introduced into the royal presence, where the king received him with a marked courtesy well calculated to gratify his vanity; nor did Madame d'Angoulême fail, "obscure gentleman" as he was, to overwhelm him with civility. His conversational powers delighted the king, who was never weary of questioning him upon his exploits, or in making merry at their success; and while the terms of their future alliance were under consideration, all the seductions of the most brilliant court in Europe were put forth to captivate his senses, and to amuse his leisure. François, however, even while he bandied compliments with a king of France, and found himself the temporary idol of some of the most beautiful women in the world, never for an instant lost his self-possession, or suffered himself to overlook the real design of all these attentions, or, above all, to forget that amid all his social familiarity Francis had never reposed sufficient confidence in his good faith to entrust to him the

real motive which had induced him to desire his friendship. He had simply stated that he desired his assistance in Germany, but he had said nothing of his intention to contend for the empire; and Seckingen, who was as proud as he was daring, resented this idle show of reserve. Meanwhile, however, all was carried on with a great affectation of openness and confidence between them; and Francis agreed to settle upon his new ally a yearly pension of three thousand francs; in return for which grant, Seckingen bound himself to protect and uphold the interests of the French king in Germany and elsewhere, as might be required of him; and this affair concluded, he took leave of the court with great honour, and received at the hands of Francis a gold chain valued at three thousand crowns, besides other presents; while each of the gentlemen of his suite was also presented with a chain of less value, but still worthy of the munificence of the monarch by whom it was bestowed. Nevertheless, the want of frankness which he had detected in the king left in the heart of Seckingen an irritation that he could not conceal; and as he quitted the palace with Fleuranges, who had been present at the leave-taking, he observed, that courteous and liberal as Francis had proved himself, and worthy as he appeared of the eminent station which he filled, he, for his part, would gladly have dispensed with the richest of his gifts, to have felt that his own intentions were better appreciated; and to have been treated with somewhat less courtesy, and more confidence.

"The king mistakes his own interest by this ill-timed caution;" he said warmly; "and does not understand

the man with whom he has to deal. Why could he not at once acknowledge that he aspired to the empire? He would have told me nothing of which I was not already well aware, and I should have felt more desire to further his purpose. Tell him, however, I pray you, from me, that I am ready to serve him according to the pledge which I have given, against all christendom, save only your own house; and that when I asked of him the men-at-arms which he saw fit to refuse, it was not that they might add to my own consequence, or serve my own purposes, but solely with the intention of gaining over some of the German gentlemen to his interests. I and mine will, however, loyally redeem our pledge, as he shall hereafter acknowledge; and you may also tell him that the princes in whom he places a faith which he has not condescended to extend to a simple gentleman like myself, will deceive him; while I, whom he has not deigned to trust, shall, with your good help, be enabled to revenge him of their perfidy."

On his return to Germany, Seckingen resumed the free system of warfare to which he had been so long accustomed; and meanwhile events occurred at the court of France which were destined to shake his alliance with Francis. The king, since his reconciliation with the Swiss cantons, had ceased to feel the same interest in his German auxiliaries; and, no longer relying upon their aid in case of necessity, even relaxed in the regard which he had previously evinced for the Duke de Gueldres himself, who was especially obnoxious to Madame d'Angoulême from the fact that he had, during her exile from the court in the reign of Louis XII, been

a firm and zealous adherent of Anne de Bretagne, for whom he was suspected of a regard which exceeded the mere attachment of a subject to his queen.

Believing, therefore, that her son was now independent of his services, Louise de Savoie suffered her pent-up hatred to appear; and urged Francis to disband the company of a hundred men then under the command of the duke, on the pretext of their inefficient state of discipline, and to discontinue the regular payment of his pensions; while she privately committed a still more glaring act of treachery towards his brother the Prince-Bishop of Liège, who was a candidate for a seat in the conclave, and to whom Francis had definitively promised the first vacant cardinalate, which had been left at his disposal by the pope.

The avarice of Louise de Savoie being as insatiable as her enmity, she was easily induced by the offer of a considerable sum of money, to address a private letter to the pontiff; in which she declared that the application about to be made to His Holiness by the French king in favour of the Bishop of Liège was a mere measure of policy enforced upon him by circumstances, while he was in reality anxious to secure the coveted dignity for Boyer, Bishop of Bourges, the brother of Thomas Bahier, Lieutenant-general of Normandy and Treasurer of the Savings-chest, one of her own creatures; nor was she deterred from this unworthy action by the fact that she had been present when Francis placed in the possession of the Marquis de Fleuranges a despatch to his uncle, signed both by himself and his mother, in which they informed M. de Liège of his promotion, and congratulated him on his new dignity; neither did her hand tremble as it was

pressed to the lips of the young courtier, on his departure from Amboise, to convey the happy tidings to his venerable relative, although she knew that he must prove the messenger of lasting and bitter disappointment. Leo, never doubting that Francis was cognisant of the contents of his mother's letter, did not hesitate for an instant; Boyer was created cardinal; and the price of this nefarious transaction duly reached the coffers of the unprincipled duchess.

Aléandro,[1] the Chancellor of Liège, who was then at Rome, where he was exerting himself to secure the election of his master, no sooner learnt that M. de Bourges had obtained the cardinalate which had been promised to his own diocesan by the king, than, apprehending treachery, he strained every nerve to ascertain the truth; and at length, through the instrumentality of the pontifical secretary, he obtained a copy of the letter addressed by Madame d'Angoulême to the pope, which he immediately forwarded to the Duke de Gueldres. The indignation of Robert de la Mark was unbounded when he learnt the deception which had been practised upon his brother; and he reproached the monarch bitterly for so glaring a breach of veracity and good faith; representing that he had already suffered sufficiently in his own person and fortunes from some groundless prejudice, and that it was a gratuitous injustice to involve his relatives in the same ruin.

[1] Jerômio Aléandro was a celebrated Italian scholar, who had been invited to France by Louis XII, by whom he was appointed professor of literature in the University of Paris. He was subsequently chancellor to Evrard de la Mark, Prince-Bishop of Liège; and ultimately became a cardinal, during the pontificate of Paul III.

Deeply moved by an accusation which affected his honour, Francis strenuously and at once denied all knowledge of the intrigue; when the duke laid before him the duplicate letter he had received from Rome, and even hinted at his expectation of redress; whereupon the king became irritated, and high words passed between them, the effects of which M. de la Mark evaded by retiring immediately from the court to his own territories, accompanied by his brother; and their arrival no sooner became known to Marguerite of Austria, the regent, than she hastened to engage them to embrace the cause of her nephew Charles; assuring to M. de Liège the cardinal's hat through his influence, and urging the duke to return to Francis the collar of St. Michael, and to trust to his new master for the honours, to which, by a career like his, he was so justly entitled. Exasperated by the treatment which they had received at the court of France, the brothers at once consented; and thus Francis not only lost two of his most zealous adherents, but by the same fatal mistake strengthened the hands of his adversary.

The surprise of both Louise de Savoie and the king was extreme when they learnt that M. de Liège had actually deserted their cause; as from the fact that he held the bishopric of Chartres, one of the richest in France, they believed themselves secure of his allegiance; never supposing that he would voluntarily resign so important and valuable a benefice. They had, however, overlooked the extent of the provocation he had received; and discovered, when it was too late, that where he had felt his honour wounded, he scorned to sacrifice his sense of dignity to considerations of interest.

The defection of the princes of Bouillon tended, moreover, greatly to diminish the zeal of Seckingen, who, having been apprised that some German traders had been grievously wronged by certain Milanese merchants, at once adopted their quarrel; and by force of arms seized property belonging to the aggressors, valued at twenty-five thousand francs, on its transit through the German states. The merchants immediately appealed to Francis for redress, complaining that they had been thus pillaged by troops in his own pay; whereupon the king called upon Seckingen to declare upon what authority he had coerced his good subjects of Milan, and impeded their commerce; to which the German leader boldly replied by declaring that he had only acted on this occasion in conformity with the vow which he had made on first taking up arms, that he would redress the wrongs of the oppressed, and revenge them upon their oppressors. That accordingly, as the German citizens had been wronged, and were too weak to defend themselves, he had done justice for them; and trusted that in future the Milanese would know better than to assume to themselves an impunity to which they were in no wise entitled.

Francis was unable to brook the fearlessness of such a reply; and becoming apprehensive that he had rather raised up an antagonist than secured a friend in the person of an individual who thus dared to brave his authority, he discontinued the pension which he had conferred upon Seckingen; who, finding himself freed by this impolitic measure from his engagements to France, lost no time in joining the Duke de Gueldres and his brother, and in transferring his services, as they

had previously done, to Charles of Spain; whose cause he materially assisted during the election, by putting himself at the head of the Suabian troops, (whom the envoys of Francis had been improvident enough to overlook until it was too late,) and occupying the neighbourhood of Frankfort; pacifically to all appearance, it is true, but in reality in readiness for any adventure which might offer itself to his quixotic spirit in the interest of his new master; a fact which was so evident to the electors themselves that it was believed to have exerted considerable power upon their decision.

An evil influence appeared, indeed, to preside over all the movements of Francis at this period; for alike by supineness and action he equally lost ground; while Charles, who was far too wary to make enemies at such a juncture, held himself prepared to take advantage of every circumstance by which he might augment his popularity. The German princes, ready as they were to profit by the profuse generosity of the French king, were yet revolted by the ostentation with which it was proffered; while the quiet and unobtrusive manner in which Charles, with equal liberality, distributed his treasure, enabled them to avoid the mortification of considering that he had put a price upon their services. Conscious, also, of the ambitious character of Francis, they shrank from the idea of elevating to the imperial dignity a monarch who might hereafter consider them rather as vassals than as sovereigns; while, ignorant of the real nature of Charles, they deluded themselves with the belief that he would never seek to arrogate to himself a greater amount of power than they might be willing to concede to him.

When endeavouring to obtain the suffrage of Henry VIII, Francis had expressed himself determined to make war upon the Turks; although, as we have already shown, there is every reason to believe that he never for an instant seriously entertained such an idea. Suffice it that he had assured Sir Thomas Boleyn, the English ambassador, that, should he succeed in becoming Emperor of Germany, "three years should not elapse ere he would be in Constantinople, or die by the way; and that he would spend three millions in gold but he would succeed;" but nevertheless, when some Turkish corsairs who were infesting the Mediterranean, and impeding the commerce of the Italian states, were bold enough to make a demonstration which alarmed not only the population generally, but even the pope himself, he was so tardy in fitting out an expedition to attack them, that, before his vessels were ready for sea, Charles had despatched his galleys under the command of Ugo de Moncada,[1] the Viceroy of Sicily, and dispersed their whole fleet. This delay on the part of the French monarch, and activity on that of Charles, had a powerful effect on the electors; and, beyond all doubt, gave the ast blow to his hopes.

[1] Ugo de Moncada was the representative of an ancient and illustrious family of Catalonia, who were at one period sovereigns of Bearn. He first attached himself to the fortunes of Charles VIII, and subsequently to those of Cæsar Borgia; after which he entered the Spanish army. He distinguished himself greatly against the pirates of the Levant, and continued to render important services to Charles V, while viceroy of Sicily. Made prisoner by Andrea Doria, in 1524, he recovered his liberty at the peace of Madrid. He took Rome in 1527, and was killed in the following year, at the naval engagement of Capo d'Orso.

CHAPTER XIV.

[1519-20.]

THE ELECTORAL DIET CONVENED AT FRANKFORT—DEATH OF M. DE BOISSY—CHARLES PROCLAIMED EMPEROR OF GERMANY—MORTIFICATION OF THE FRENCH MINISTERS—SELF-COMMAND OF FRANCIS—BIRTH OF A PRINCE—HENRY VIII. BECOMES HIS SPONSOR—PROGRESS OF THE LUTHERAN FAITH—LOUISE DE SAVOIE ESTABLISHES HERSELF AT THE TUILERIES—FRANCIS RESOLVES TO REBUILD THE LOUVRE—BONNIVET EXCITES THE KING TO ENTER UPON A NEW WAR—FRANCIS BRIBES WOLSEY—HENRY AND FRANCIS ARRANGE A PERSONAL INTERVIEW—THE NAVARRESE QUESTION IS REVIVED BETWEEN THE EMPEROR AND THE FRENCH KING—CRITICAL POSITION OF CHARLES V.—THE FIELD OF THE CLOTH OF GOLD—THE BANQUET—THE TREATY—THE TOURNAY—FEARLESSNESS OF FRANCIS—AN EXCHANGE OF VISITS—THE TWO QUEENS—THE PARTING MASS—CONFIRMATION OF THE TREATY—DEPARTURE OF HENRY VIII. FOR GRAVELINES—FRANCIS RETURNS TO FRANCE.

CHAPTER XIV.

[1519-20.]

Thus were things situated, when, in the middle of June, the electoral diet was convened in the usual form in the city of Frankfort; but, before its proceedings commenced, Francis had sustained an irreparable loss in the death of M. de Boissy his ancient governor, who had been busied at Montpelier, in conjunction with M. de Chièvres the minister of Charles, in endeavouring to reconcile the interests of the rival sovereigns, and thus preserving Europe from the horrors of an universal war. They had already been engaged for two months in this momentous undertaking, and had begun to entertain some hopes of ultimate success, when M. de Boissy, who had long been an invalid, experienced a renewed and more severe attack of his malady, to which he fell a victim.

This event was a serious one to Francis, whose natural impetuosity and recklessness had been frequently checked by the wise and prudent admonitions of the grand-master; and at this particular crisis it was doubly unfortunate, leaving him, as it did, to the mercy of more interested and less judicious counsellors; and, above all,

to the influence of his mother, who ere this period had succeeded, with more or less difficulty, in bending to her imperious will all the ministers of the crown with the exception of Boissy himself, whose earnest devotion to the interests of his former pupil rendered him invulnerable alike to threats, bribes, and flattery.

Nor was the death of M. de Boissy the only fatal privation experienced by the young king during the course of the present year, for the veteran Leonardo da Vinci, a month or two subsequently, terminated his earthly career at the ripe age of seventy-five. Francis was affectionately attached to his distinguished *protégé*, whom he had loaded with honours; and he no sooner ascertained that his end was approaching, than he hastened to the death-chamber. Da Vinci had just received the last consolations of religion when he discovered the presence of the king; and, despite his exhaustion, he endeavoured to rise in his bed, in order to express his sense of the favour which was thus shown him; but the effort was too great, and before he had uttered more than a few sentences expressive of his regret that he had not used his talents more profitably for religion, he was seized with a paroxysm which rendered him speechless. As he fell back upon his pillow, the king sprang forward and raised his head upon his arm; and thus, upon the bosom of the young monarch, Leonardo da Vinci drew his last breath. The good effects of his sojourn at the French court did not, however, expire with him. Although he had declined, owing to his advanced age, to undertake any new work, he had given public lessons and lectures which had awakened an

emulation in art destined to produce the most beneficial results; and the three famous artists, Cousin, Janet, and Limoges, were alike his pupils.

Towards the close of June the diet at length assembled; when the deliberations were opened by the Archbishop of Mayence, who, in a speech of great length, consummate tact, and extraordinary eloquence, pleaded the cause of Charles. He argued that, should the electors invest Francis with the imperial dignity, he would inevitably endeavour to annihilate the liberties of Germany, even as he was now endeavouring to subjugate those of Italy; and that he would also, beyond all doubt, exert his influence to render the crown hereditary, and thus aggrandize his successors by the prostration of the privilege at present enjoyed by the electors. "How little can it be expected;" he pursued; "that he will continue either to the princes, or to the free territories, the liberty they have so long enjoyed, when experience has shown us that even in France, where formerly the great nobles dispensed justice, and executed judgment within their own provinces, not one princely personage is now to be found who does not quail before the slightest gesture of the king, or who dares do otherwise than applaud all which it may be his royal pleasure to say or do." He next warned the electors not to be misled by the promises of the French ambassadors, who had stated that their sovereign, immediately that he should have attained the imperial crown, was prepared to direct the whole strength of his kingdom against the Infidels; reminding them that an opportunity had recently occurred in which he might have proved his good faith and zeal in a cause

so important to all Christendom, and in which he had failed; leaving to the King of Castile, who had made no protestations upon the subject, the noble task of sweeping the seas of the first Mahomedan fleet which had dared to menace the shores of Italy. "No!" he concluded energetically; "It is not in order to subjugate the Infidels that the King of France covets the throne of Germany; it is that he may slake the thirst of that ambition by which he is known to be possessed. It is that he may secure alike to himself and to his children the proudest diadem in Europe. It is, in short, that he may be enabled through this accession of strength, to possess himself of the inheritance of Charles in the Low Countries and Spain, and involve all Europe in a ruinous and interminable war, which would be alike costly and degrading to the German empire."

The Archbishop of Trèves argued in reply, that the King of Castile was as thoroughly a foreigner as Francis; that he had been both born and educated in the Low Countries, and that, consequently, the German people could have neither sympathies nor prejudices in common with a prince of whose habits, tastes, and tendencies they were wholly ignorant. He laid, moreover, great stress upon the fact that the geographical position of the French king's dominions rendered him the most eligible candidate for the imperial dignity, as France might be conveniently united with both Germany and Italy, and thus form a compact portion of the empire; whereas Spain, separated from Germany by France, would necessarily oppose her national antipathies to the common interest, and either refuse to suffer her monarch to absent himself from her

own territories, or encourage his views of domination in Italy, which were no less to be deprecated than those of Francis.

It will be obvious on reviewing the arguments of both orators that they were rather objective than laudatory; each found tangible reasons for opposing his adversary, while neither could advance very valid ones for supporting his own candidate; and it was probably from this cause that the electors, after having patiently listened to the discussion, resolved to maintain their independence by rejecting both, and placing the imperial authority in the hands of one of their own body. In pursuance of this determination, the empire was offered, on the 4th of July, to Frederic, Duke of Saxony; and it is certain that the mental and moral qualifications of that prince reflected honour on their judgment; but Frederic was too wise to indulge his ambition at the expense of his true interests, and he at once felt that he was not strong enough to brave the animosity of two powerful monarchs. He, therefore, firmly withstood the temptation, recommending the electors who had evinced such confidence in himself, to elevate to the imperial throne the grandson of Maximilian, whose interests were identified with those of Germany, and whose prompt courage and judicious zeal had already been displayed in his late expedition against their common enemy, the Infidel. The King of Bohemia, the Marquis of Brandenbourg, and the Prelates of Cologne and Mayence, supported the proposition; and ultimately, on the 5th of July, Charles was proclaimed Emperor of Germany in the church of St. Barthélemy, by the universal suffrages of the assembly.

A solemn embassy was despatched to Barcelona where Charles was then residing, to announce his election, and to invite him to repair with all possible speed to his new dominions; greatly to the displeasure of his Spanish subjects, who had vainly endeavoured to dissuade him from prosecuting his attempts at empire; and who being already irritated by the authority arrogated by the Flemish favourites of the monarch, very naturally anticipated equal mortification from the Germans, so soon as Charles should find it necessary to his interests to invest them with office, or to conciliate them by honours and emoluments wrested from themselves.

The young monarch, however, disregarded their arguments; and, after having given the ambassadors a magnificent reception, accepted the new dignity with which he had been invested by the electoral college, pledging himself religiously to observe the conditions which were annexed to it.

While this ceremony was going forward in Spain, the French ministers hastened to return to their own country, deeply mortified by their defeat, and full of regret for the enormous sums which they had so uselessly lavished. Bonnivet alone was still in possession of some portion of the treasure which had been confided to him, and he lost no time in making his escape in order to place it in security; a precaution which proved to have been well-founded, as it narrowly escaped falling into the hands of Seckingen, who had organized a plan for possessing himself of the state-chest, and diminishing the responsibility of the baffled favourite.

Francis bitterly felt his defeat. It was not alone the

loss of the empire which galled him, but the conviction that he had been worsted by an adversary whom he had been ill advised enough to despise, because ignorant of his real character and resources. Now, however, he was at once made aware of his error; the skilful measures and quiet perseverance of Charles had triumphed over his own profusion and previsions; and in their first struggle for preeminence he had been signally worsted. Nevertheless, stung as he was, he disdained to betray the excess of his mortification and disappointment; and he even controlled his real feelings so far as to write to the pope at the close of the election, declaring that he rejoiced to have failed in a chimerical project which had been put into his head by certain of the German princes, particularly as he had ascertained from his uncle, M. de Savoie, that it was most unpalatable to his subjects; who were apprehensive that the obligations which would have been imposed on him had he succeeded, would have interfered with the interests of France.

On the 31st of March in this year (1519), the queen had given birth to a second son, at St. Germain-en-Laye; and Francis had, in anticipation of the event, already instructed Sir Richard Wingfield to solicit Henry VIII, in the event of his hope being realized by the birth of a prince, to stand sponsor for the child, and to give him his own name.

To this proposition Henry at once acceded; and the ceremony was performed on the 4th of June, Sir Thomas Boleyn officiating as proxy for his Sovereign, in conjunction with the Duke d'Alençon and the Duchess de Nemours. At the termination of the baptismal service,

Francis expressed to the English ambassador his sense of the great honour which had been conferred upon him by the "king's highnesse," and the gratification which he should feel, when in his turn Henry should become the father of a son, to do the like for him; declaring that, meanwhile, the child who now bore his name should no sooner have attained to an age qualifying him for such a privilege, than he would forthwith send him to the king's grace in England to do him service.

The Lutheran party had profited by the late interregnum to increase their influence, and to propagate their dogmas, which they had been enabled to do with little molestation. It is true that Maximilian had endeavoured near the close of his life to suppress the new sect, from which he began to apprehend danger; but the two vicars of the empire, the Duke of Saxony and the Elector-Palatine, who assumed the imperial authority immediately after his death, had already become converts to the reformed tenets, and protected Luther from all persecution; while Charles, who owed his new dignity to the former, whose German territories were not safe from the incursions of the Turks, and who already detected the germs of revolt in Spain, wilfully closed his eyes to the religious troubles in Saxony, and left the care of suppressing them to the pope. As the immediate interests of the French king were not, however, involved in the controversy, we shall abstain from a recapitulation of circumstances already familiar to all our readers, and which have been repeatedly detailed much more ably than we could hope to relate them; and confine ourselves to matters more strictly within our own province.

Early in this year Louise de Savoie, finding herself inconvenienced by the closeness of the apartments which she occupied in the palace of the Tournelles during her occasional residence in the capital, had induced her son to purchase for her a residence on the banks of the Seine with an extensive garden, and commanding the most varied and delightful views of the surrounding country; in exchange for which the proprietor, Nicolas de Neuville, Seigneur de Villeray, received the estate of Chanteloup near Montlhéry. Large sums of money were expended on the embellishment of this house, where Francis frequently visited his mother, and where he indulged that passion for magnificence for which he had always been distinguished. Costly hangings of Flanders tapestry, inlaid furniture, panelled mirrors, and vessels of gold and silver, were to be seen on every side; and such was the origin of the palace of the Tuileries, which Catherine de' Medici subsequently converted at once into a royal abode and a national monument. The young king was so enchanted by the capabilities of the spot that he forthwith resolved to rebuild the Louvre, a work which he accordingly commenced, but of which he was not destined to do more than lay the foundation.

Meanwhile he found it agreeable to escape from the gloomy apartments of his own palace, or from the rigid circle of his wife, to wander over the smooth lawns and among the dense shrubberies of the gardens of the Tuileries, with the bright-eyed and light-headed ladies of the more indulgent duchess; to glide over the calm current of the Seine in a gilded barge, with

Madame de Châteaubriand by his side; or to angle under the shade of a silken pavilion, while Marot[1] recited to him his last new poem, or eulogised the somewhat indifferent effusions of the monarch himself; who, believing that he could at will become a poet, as he imagined that he had already become a scholar, was constantly amusing himself by the composition of lyrical and amatory verses, which, as a matter of course, delighted the whole court.

It is probable that the jealousy which existed between the new emperor and the king of France might have slumbered for a time, had not the death of M. de Boissy occurred at so unfortunate a moment; for, conscious how much the nation had already become impoverished by the Milanese expedition and the contest for the imperial crown, that upright and prudent minister had left no measure untried to dissuade Francis from undertaking a new war. The people already murmured at the increased taxation which these speculations had rendered imperative; and while Duprat, anxious at once to enrich himself and Madame d'Angoûlême, affected to believe that the nation still possessed many resources which would suffice to meet any new de-

[1] Clément Marot was born at Cahors in 1495; and succeeded his father Jehan Marot as *valet-de-chambre* to Francis I, whom he accompanied to the battle of Pavia. Being accused of heresy, he was imprisoned, but afterwards liberated by the Queen of Navarre. He was one of the most correct and elegant of the French prose writers, and the first poet of his day. His *Epistle to Francis I*, his *Rondeaux*, his *Sonnets*, his *Epigrams*, his *Elegies*, and his *Ballads*, have obtained for him a lasting reputation. His *Translation of the Psalms of David*, continued by M. de Bèze, were long used in the Protestant churches. He also wrote a poem entitled *Hell*, which was a biting satire upon the legal profession. He died in 1544.

mand upon its revenues, Gouffier de Boissy looked with a steady eye at present discontents, and foresaw the moment when the sovereign would come into a contact with his overburthened people, which might prove fatal to both. The outlay of the court was in itself excessive; but with the prescience of a wary statesman he preferred to encourage an evil to which he felt that he could apply a remedy, rather than weakly to permit a greater which it might be beyond his skill to counteract; and thus, during his life, he had been enabled by the great influence he possessed over the king, to keep his belligerent tastes in check, and to make him comprehend and appreciate the perils upon which he was so eager to rush.

His death, however, opened the floodgates of the king's ambition, or rather removed the dam by which it had been hitherto pent in; and Francis found in the arguments of Bonnivet, who panted for revenge upon Charles, and whose romantic imagination found equivalent food only in conquest and victory; in his mother, who was anxious for the aggrandizement of her son, and who never permitted herself to dream of failure; and in the entreaties of Madame de Châteaubriand, who for the moment coincided in the sentiments of Louise de Savoie, because she trusted in the event of a war to see her third brother Lespare acquire high military rank, more than the incentives which he required to recommence a struggle that must necessarily involve all the highest interests of his kingdom.

He no sooner determined upon hostilities toward his victorious rival than he first turned his thoughts to England. He was united to Henry VIII. by close and intimate bonds. The British monarch had not only

affianced his daughter to the dauphin, but he had also become sponsor to the younger French prince; and although he had maintained a sullen neutrality during the struggle for empire, Francis either felt, or affected to feel, that he had been as much injured as himself by the result of the election, and consequently spared no pains to inspire him with the same sentiments. Moreover, he was urged to this policy by a desire to put his Belgian frontiers into an efficient state of defence; and, above all, to prevent an alliance between Henry and Charles, which must have destroyed the balance of power in Europe. He was aware that the noble hostages whom he had delivered over to England were unwearied in their endeavours to effect a still closer alliance between himself and his brother-monarch, and that they were constantly assuring Henry that he required only a personal knowledge of their own sovereign to render them firm allies; and he lost no time in strengthening their arguments by using every means in his power to secure the good-will of Wolsey, whose anxiety to attain to the papacy made him on his side desirous of gaining the friendship of such of the continental princes as were the most likely to forward his design.

To attain this end Francis lavished upon the English minister the most costly gifts and the most magnificent promises; all of which were received in a manner which served to strengthen his hopes, and to buoy him up with an anticipation of ultimate success; while the cardinal, who never suffered himself to be misled by present advantages, was calmly weighing in his mind the probable results of the impending struggle, and at length

came to the conclusion that the emperor of Germany must ere long command more influence at the court of Rome than the king of France. Henry, however, it is certain, had more personal sympathies with Francis than with his rival; they were of the same age, were addicted to the same pleasures, and swayed by the same impulses; and thus, unsuspicious that the gold and the pledges of Charles to his ambitious and avaricious minister had already outweighed those of the French king, he was induced to consent to the celebrated interview between Francis and himself, which the former had suggested to Sir Thomas Boleyn at the christening of his son.

Meanwhile there existed many causes for discontent between the emperor and the king of France. Charles had failed to fulfil his engagement relatively to the kingdom of Navarre, despite the pledge which he had given at Noyon. Both the king and queen, Jean and Catherine were dead; while their son Henry II, at this period only fifteen years of age, was the ward of Alain Albret his uncle, and resided in the French provinces, the only territories he had inherited from his father, who had held the kingdom of Navarre by right of his wife; and who, when he demanded the restoration of the Spanish portion of the country, was opposed by the minister Chièvres, who negatived the claim of Germaine de Foix, declaring that she had made a donation of it to Ferdinand the grandfather of Charles. This arrangement had, for a time, been admitted by France; but on the second marriage of the dowager-queen the parliament of Paris had declared the donation to be no longer valid, and had admitted the right of Henry II. to the succession. Not

satisfied with denying this claim, the emperor had at the same time revived all the old discontents of his ancestors against the predecessors of the French king; and while he contested the right of Francis to the Milanese, he also insisted on the restoration of the duchy of Burgundy, which he declared to have been unjustly wrested from his grandmother Mary, the daughter of Charles the Bold; while in reply to these demands Francis once more renewed his own to the kingdom of Naples, which Ferdinand had usurped from Louis XII; and reclaimed the homage which was due to him from Charles as Count of Flanders.

Nevertheless, bitter as the contention soon became, the young emperor shrank from the responsibility which must be entailed upon him by a new and doubtful war. Every province of Spain was in partial revolt; the Germans were full of discontent; and he had been so long absent from the Low Countries that he began to feel his influence even there on the decline; while Francis, although he had less reason for uneasiness, suffered himself so weakly to be engrossed by pleasure and dissipation that he also lost the favourable moment; and lavished the immense sums which were extorted from the people under the pretence of state emergencies, in the most puerile and senseless outlay.

Thus were things situated when preparations were commenced for the interview between Henry and Francis which had been at length agreed upon; and they were of so costly a description that they were not terminated until the spring of the following year (1520). The French king, who was more anxious to accomplish a lasting alliance with his brother-monarch than to enter

into a rivalry of magnificence, had, as it would appear from a letter still extant, addressed by Sir Richard Wingfield to Cardinal Wolsey, been desirous on this occasion to dispense with all save the necessary ceremonial. Aware that his oft-replenished treasury would not do more than suffice for the war which he meditated, he even controlled his natural love of splendour and display so far as to suggest to the English courtier that Henry and himself should meet rather as fast friends than as rival sovereigns; but the suggestion was overruled both by Henry VIII. and his minister; the former being anxious to dazzle Francis by his profusion, and the latter to impress him with a sense of his own importance.

Piqued by the indifference displayed on the part of the English monarch to an outlay from which he had himself shrank, Francis accordingly indulged himself in the most lavish expenditure; while in emulation of their sovereign, all the nobles of his court, impoverished as many of them were by the late struggle at Frankfort, vied with each other in an uncalculating profusion which was destined to cripple their resources for many subsequent years. "The great outlay that was made," says Du Bellay; "cannot be estimated; but many carried their mills, their forests, and their meadows, upon their backs."

The details of the ceremony were entirely regulated by Wolsey, such having been the proposition of Francis, who hoped by this display of confidence further to conciliate the haughty minister; and they were arranged with a punctilious minutia which savoured more of suspicion than of that friendship and good-will which each

monarch professed for the other. It was decided that the meeting should take place on the boundary of the English possessions in France, in requital of the courtesy, or rather as an equivalent for the condescension, of Henry in having crossed the channel to effect it; and ultimately an open plain was selected situate between Guisnes and Ardres. But, before the two sovereigns met, Charles, anxious to weaken any favourable impression which might be produced on the mind of Henry VIII. by a personal interview with the French king, resolved, when on his way from Spain to Aix-la-Chapelle where he was to be invested with the imperial crown, to visit England, under the pretext of a desire to present his respects to Katherine of Aragon his aunt, whom he had never seen. Henry was already on his way to Dover when the intelligence of the emperor's arrival reached him, and he immediately despatched the Cardinal-minister with a brilliant retinue to give him welcome. A dead calm which had delayed the arrival of Charles in the port, compelled him to have recourse to his boats, and it was only towards evening that he was enabled to land; when he was met by the reverend envoy, who greeted him in the name of his royal master, and received him with all the honour due to his exalted rank.

The disembarkation was conducted with extreme magnificence. The emperor moved forward under a canopy on which the black eagle was displayed upon a ground of cloth of gold; followed by a train of princes, princesses, and nobles, splendidly attired; and in this state he proceeded to the castle, where a sump-

tuous banquet was served up, amid the acclamations of the multitude who had collected to witness the landing.

While at Canterbury the king was apprised of the fact that Charles had already reached Dover castle; upon which he again mounted in all haste, travelled by torch-light, and arrived at the castle towards midnight with his train of attendants, creating so much disturbance as to awaken the emperor; who, upon being informed of its cause immediately left his bed, and flinging his mantle about him hastened to meet his royal host whom he encountered upon the stairs; where, says the old chronicler, "eche embraced other right louingly," and the king conducted the emperor back to his apartment, conversing gaily with him, and welcoming him heartily to England.

On the Whitsunday following, the two sovereigns rode together to Canterbury, where they were received by the queen at the head of her court, composed of all that was fairest and noblest in the realm; and ultimately, on the 31st of May, the imperial visitor, having succeeded in ingratiating himself with Henry, weakened the interest felt by the English monarch for Francis, and arranged a future meeting in which their several interests were to be discussed and united, took leave of the king and queen with the most emphatic and courteous expressions of gratitude and regard; and, profiting by a favourable wind, once more embarked for Flanders.

Charles had, moreover, during this brief sojourn in England, effected more than even Henry was aware of; for, conscious that the English monarch was ruled

by the cardinal in all matters of state policy, he had lost no opportunity of impressing upon him the great admiration which he felt for his talents, and his desire to secure the friendship of one whom he foresaw would ere long fill the most sacred throne in Europe; while these honied words were accompanied by promises so unreserved, and by presents so magnificent, that the vanity and cupidity of the minister soon rendered him as anxious to serve the interests of the emperor as he had previously declared himself desirous to further those of Francis. His insatiable ambition, which ever pointed to the triple crown, blinded him to his bad faith; and while Charles expatiated on his determination to second his views by every means within his power —a promise which he made the more readily from the fact that Leo X. being still in the prime of life, it was improbable that he should for many years be called upon to redeem his pledge—Wolsey, as he listened, became a convert to all his views, and readily undertook to negative the attempts of the French king to secure an alliance with his master.

The intelligence of this extraordinary and unlooked-for visit excited the apprehensions of Francis, who had already become aware that Charles made no important movement without a corresponding motive; and he accordingly hastened to complete his preparations, in order to counteract as speedily as possible the evil influence which had been exerted against him.

In preparation for the meeting the French king had caused three buildings to be erected; two of which were of solid materials, and within the walls of the town;

the first was appropriated to the queen and the ladies of her suite, and the other to the state banquets which were to be given to Henry and his court; while a third, without the walls, was built in the form of a Roman coliseum, the chambers, saloons, and galleries being of wood on a foundation of stone, and the whole covered in with cloth. Moreover, as the two monarchs had agreed to meet in the plain, Francis also prepared tents and pavilions of the most magnificent description. The more costly of these were hung with cloth of gold, draped within and without in every compartment, and others were of plain cloth of gold, or cloth of gold and silver interwoven. They were all surmounted, moreover, by devices or globes of the same precious materials, save that of the king himself, over which, in order to distinguish it from the rest, was placed a figure of St. Michael of beaten gold; "but;" says Fleuranges, with his accustomed *persiflage;* "it was hollow."

All this magnificence was, however, even upon the testimony of the French courtier himself, eclipsed by the solitary, and, in so far as externals went, inferior edifice prepared for Henry, and which was erected at the gates of Guisnes, near the castle. It was an immense square building, composed simply of wood, canvass, and glass; but the latter was used with such profusion that one portion of the colossal pile resembled a gigantic lantern, a luxury which at that period created great astonishment. The whole structure formed a quadrangle of princely proportions, enclosing a court, in the centre of which, and facing the principal entrance, were two fine fountains each of which had three jets, playing hypocras,

water, and wine, into spacious basins. The chapel, which was of imposing size, and richly hung with tapestry, was adorned with the most costly plate and the most valuable relics; while the cellars and butteries were worthy of the building to which they appertained; both kings welcoming all comers, and vying with each other in an hospitality that was boundless.

What most excited the admiration of the French was, however, the fact that this enormous edifice had been constructed entirely in England, and brought over piecemeal; and that, while from the circumstance of its being entirely covered with canvass painted to resemble stone-work, and lined throughout with tapestry, it had an appearance of solidity which would have deceived the eye into a belief that it was intended to endure for centuries, the two kings had no sooner parted than it was once more disjointed, re-embarked, and conveyed back to England; "without any cost," as Du Bellay expresses it; "save that of the carriage."

The arrangements made for the two queens and their respective suites were gorgeous in the extreme; pearls and jewels were lavished, not only upon the canopies above their chairs of state, but also upon the very foot-cloths by which they were approached; while their garments were of piled velvet, or cloth of gold and silver, embroidered with gems and coloured silks in large masses; or Lyons damasks, studded with silver stars, or traversed by broad bars of gold. Nor were the fair and noble ladies by whom they were attended much less magnificently attired than themselves; although, as a contemporaneous chronicler declares, the "English dames

wore the richest and the costliest habits, but the French ones arranged theirs with more taste and elegance, so that their visitors soon began to adopt the mode of the country, by which they lost in modesty what they gained in comeliness."

It is to be supposed that the rigid circle of Claude were not among those against whom this reproach was registered.

At length the important day of meeting was decided on, and the ceremonial savoured at once of the suspicion and arrogance of the cardinal-minister; who, amid the pompous display which he had induced Henry to make, had been even more mindful of his own dignity than that of his master; his train of bishops, priests, deacons, pages, and men-at-arms being rather those of a sovereign-prince than of any subject, however elevated his rank.

It was arranged that the king of England should advance half-a-mile beyond the Castle of Guisnes, towards Ardres, but still within his own territories, where he should halt in the open plain; and that the French monarch should progress precisely the same distance from Ardres towards the same spot, at the same day and hour, which would bring him within the limits of Henry's domain of Guisnes. "In the whiche;" proceeds Hall, generally so punctiliously correct in his details; "there shall not bee set nor dressed any pauillions or tentes, and there the said twoo kinges beyinge on horsebacke, with their retinue, shall se the one thother, and salute eche other, and speake together familiarly and common in that sort and maner, and so long as shall seme to them good."

Herein, however, he has committed an error, as both Du Bellay and Fleuranges assert that a pavilion had been expressly erected for the interview, into which the two sovereigns were to adjourn after they had exchanged compliments and congratulations.

Warning guns having been fired from both Ardres and Guisnes, the rival processions set forward at the same instant: Francis, mounted upon a splendid horse, whose housings flashed in the sunlight like living fire, so thickly were they studded with precious stones and gold; and followed by all the chivalry of France. The suspicious jealousy of Wolsey had determined him, however, to regulate the number of attendants by whom the two sovereigns were to be severally accompanied to the tent of audience; and he decided upon two on either side, while he himself as minister of England, and Robertet as that of France, should await them at the entrance. The nobles selected by Francis to be present at the interview, were the Connétable de Bourbon and the Chancellor Duprat; while Henry conferred the same honour upon the Dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk.

Francis arrived first upon the field; but in a few instants the English king appeared at about the distance of an arrow's flight, riding a Spanish charger of great strength and beauty, and magnificently caparisoned. Here the English party suddenly paused; Lord Abergavenny assuring the king that the number of the French exceeded that of his own followers, as he had ascertained from having already been among them; when the Earl of Shrewsbury, angered at so puerile a terror, hastened in

his turn to put an end to a delay which if not absolutely suspicious was at least discourteous, by declaring that he also had paid a visit to the rival camp. "And, Sir;" he said firmly; "the Frenchmen are more in fear of your grace and of your subjects than your subjects are of them; wherefore, if I might venture to offer my opinion, I would counsel your highness to proceed."

"So we intend, my lord;" was the instant reply of Henry; whereupon the officers-at-arms gave the word: "On, afore;" and once more the glittering cavalcade was in motion towards the bank of the Adern, where every noble and gentleman fell into his proper place, and the whole party halted with their faces towards the valley.

The Duke de Bourbon, as Connétable of France, bore his drawn sword in front of his sovereign, which Henry VIII. no sooner remarked than he desired the Marquis of Dorset, who carried his own sword of state, to unsheathe it in like manner; and this done, the monarchs rode into the valley, where they at length met face to face at the head of two of the most brilliant assemblages of nobility which had ever been seen in Europe. For a brief instant both paused, as they surveyed each other with astonishment and admiration; for they were at that period, beyond all parallel, the two most comely princes in Christendom. Francis was the taller and the more slender of the two; and was attired in a vest of cloth of silver damasked with gold, and edged with a border of embossed work in party-coloured silks. Over this he wore a cloak of brocaded satin, with a scarf of gold and purple crossing over one shoulder, and buttoned to the waist, richly set with pearls and precious stones; while his long hair escaped from beneath a coif

of damasked gold set with diamonds, and gave him a noble and graceful appearance which his splendid horsemanship, and handsome, although strongly defined features, his bushy whiskers, and ample moustache, tended to enhance. Henry, on his side, wore a vest of crimson velvet slashed with white satin, and buttoned down the chest with studs composed of large and precious jewels; and his round velvet *toque* or hat was surmounted by a profuse plume which floated on the wind, save where it was confined by a star of brilliants. His figure, although more bulky than that of his brother monarch, was still well-proportioned; his movements were elastic and unembarrassed; and his face attractive from the frankness of its expression, the singular brightness of his eyes, and the luxuriance of his hair and beard, which he wore in a dense fringe beneath his chin, and which was at that period less red than golden.

The mutual scrutiny of the two young sovereigns lasted only a moment; in the next they were in each other's arms, each straining from the saddle to embrace his brother-monarch. The horse of Henry swerved for an instant impatient of the impediment, but the hand of Francis firmly grasped the rein which its rider had suffered to escape him; and after a renewed exchange of courtesies, the attendant equerries were summoned to hold the stirrups of their royal masters as they alighted. On gaining their feet the two kings exchanged another embrace; and then, arm-in-arm, they proceeded to the pavilion of audience, followed each by his selected witnesses. On their entrance the Lord-Cardinal of York was presented to Francis,

and M. de Robertet to the English king, during which time the whole of the respective guards and retinues halted at the entrance of the camp, about a stone's throw from the pavilion; comprising, besides the train of nobles on either side, four hundred body guards in state uniforms. Nor had they cause of weariness as they awaited the royal leisure, for as they reined up their horses beside the barrier, the whole magnificence of the camp burst upon them, with its frail but costly tenements gleaming in the sun like some fairy creation; and winning by its gorgeousness the admiration of the spectators, and the enduring appellation of The Field of Cloth of Gold.

A splendid banquet had been prepared for the princely guests; and as they pledged each other in the generous wine of the country, Francis, grasping the hand of his royal companion, said courteously and emphatically; "Thus far, with some fatigue, my dear brother and cousin, have I travelled in order to enjoy a personal interview with you; and I think that you will put faith in my sincerity when I say that I believe you esteem me on your side, and feel convinced of my readiness as well as ability to aid you should need be; which my kingdom and my principalities will alike enable me to do."

"Sir;" replied Henry with equal suavity and emphasis; "I regard not either your realm or its dependencies, but rather the stedfast and loyal observance of the treaties into which we have conjointly entered; and should you strictly observe these, then do I not hesitate to affirm that my eyes have never looked upon a prince whom my heart could better love; and glad I am that

in order to secure your affection I was induced not only to cross the seas, but also to ride to the furthermost boundary of my kingdom in order to meet you here."

These courteous speeches exchanged, and the banquet removed, the articles of the proposed treaty were laid before the sovereigns by their respective ministers; upon which the English king drew the papers towards him, and began by reading aloud those containing the propositions of Francis; and these concluded, he opened his own, and was commencing, "I, Henry, king of ——" The document ran, "king of France and England," but he at once felt the futility and impropriety of such an assumption on the present occasion, and suddenly pausing, he looked with a smile towards his royal auditor, and said gaily; "I shall not insert all that I see here, for as you are present, I should lie." After which he resumed his task, saying steadily, "I, Henry, king of England"—and then continued without further interruption to the close of the document.

"And well drawn-up and written were those articles;" says Fleuranges; "*had they only been observed.*"

This important labour accomplished, the two sovereigns decided upon the spot where the lists and scaffoldings should be erected for a tournament, being alike resolved to spend the time which they should pass together in pleasure and amusement; leaving their respective counsellors to negotiate all public business, and to report to them each evening the progress they had made towards a mutual acceptance of the terms of the treaty. This being finally agreed, they parted with mutual expres-

sions of affection and regard; and while Francis returned to Ardres, Henry rode back into the town of Guisnes, where he passed the night, reserving the monster building we have described for the exigencies of the day.

At the fall of evening Cardinal Wolsey, accompanied by one of the English members of council, waited upon the French king by desire of his master, to arrange measures by which they might frequently meet without distrust or apprehension on either side; and it was finally settled that the kings should *fête* the queens, and the queens the kings; and thus when Henry should arrive at Ardres to visit the Queen of France, Francis, previously apprised of his intention, should at the same moment set forth for Guisnes to share the hospitality of the Queen of England; by which means each would become hostage for the other.

All that was requisite when this irksome and ungracious matter had been decided on, was to prepare for the tournay, which had been appointed for the following morning. A large space was accordingly enclosed by rails and ditches, beside which platforms were erected for the spectators; and at one end a lofty mound was raised, upon which a hawthorn tree and a raspberry bush, intended to represent the devices of the two kings, were conspicuously displayed. On the right side of the lists a velvet canopy was erected, under which the queens were seated with a numerous train of ladies, all richly attired, and awaiting with impatience the commencement of the sports. At the principal entrance of the enclosure were two lodges, appropriated to the knights who guarded the barrier; and beside these were two

spacious cellars, which were amply provided with wine for the refreshment of all comers.

As the sovereigns entered the arena, their respective shields were attached to the symbolic trees upon the mount; and the young monarchs, at the head of their noble followers, then engaged in the warlike pastime, and encountered all combatants who presented themselves; when many a rude combat took place, as was to be expected where the flower of the youth and chivalry of the two first nations in Europe met to sustain the honour of their several countries. These sports continued for twelve or fifteen days, and were diversified by balls, banquets, and other festivities in which the sister-queens and their ladies could bear a part; but long before their cessation, Francis, whose open and generous spirit was vexed by the suspicious and unnecessary restraints which had been put upon a free and unconstrained intercourse between the two courts, rose one morning at an unusually early hour, and accompanied only by two gentlemen and a page, mounted an ungroomed horse, and with no other preparation than that of throwing a Spanish cloak across his shoulders, galloped over to the castle of Ardres to pay a visit to the English king.

When he reached the drawbridge, the guards, astonished by such an apparition, were at a loss how to act; and the governor of the citadel who was stationed at the spot with two hundred archers was even more amazed than his men. As the young monarch passed among them he laughingly commanded them to surrender, declaring that he intended to make all the garrison prisoners; after which he desired to be shown to the chamber of Henry, and despite the

remonstrance of the bewildered governor, who ventured to suggest that his royal master still slept, he knocked loudly at the door, awoke his brother potentate, and entered. The English monarch was as much amazed as his men-at-arms by this bold proceeding; but meeting his visitor in the same spirit, he raised himself in his bed, and said joyously; "Brother, you have played me the cleverest trick that one man could do to another, and have shown me the whole extent of the confidence which I ought to place in you; as for myself, I surrender at discretion, and am your prisoner from this moment."

As he spoke he unclasped a collar from his neck valued at fifteen thousand angels, and placed it in the hand of Francis, praying him to accept and wear it for the love of his captive; whereupon Francis, who had already designed to offer a pledge of friendship to his new ally at this their first unconstrained meeting, unclasped from his wrist a bracelet of twice the same amount, and besought him to receive it as a token of the love he bore him. The exchange was frankly made; and while Henry fastened the costly manacle upon his arm, his visitor adjusted the collar about his neck; after which, amid laughter and jests, the English king sprang from his bed, and was assisted at his toilette by his unbidden but welcome guest, who declared that for that day at least he should have no other attendant; and when with infinite merriment the one had tendered, and the other had accepted, his services, Francis took leave in order to return to Ardres; despite the entreaties of Henry, who would have detained him in order to prepare for the joust of the afternoon.

On his way back to his own camp, Francis encountered a number of his nobles who had come to meet him, alarmed for his safety; and among the foremost was Fleuranges, who reproached him bitterly for the unnecessary peril in which he had placed himself; but the young king only jested at their uneasiness, declaring that henceforward the two nations would be better friends than ever, and themselves enabled to enjoy with a higher zest the pleasures by which they were surrounded; a prediction whose correctness was confirmed on the following morning, when Henry returned the visit of his brother monarch in the same manner in which it had been made; and after a new interchange of presents and professions, rode home in his turn to Guisnes without guard or weapon.

Meanwhile the two queens profited even more greatly than their royal consorts by this well-conceived confidence; for, although they had felt a mutual esteem from the first moment in which they met, their intercourse had hitherto been constrained and ceremonious; whereas after this exchange of visits they found themselves at once released from the trammels of etiquette and caution, and were enabled to cultivate each other's society without impediment. The gratification was great on both sides, for each was well able to appreciate the other. It is true that at this period the unfortunate Katherine of Aragon was still happy in the love of her husband, while Claude was already a neglected wife; but the gentle melancholy of the English queen,—a melancholy which almost seemed a foretaste of the future,—harmonized well with the heart-stricken sadness of her new

friend. The one was already sated with gaud and glitter, and the other had never loved them. The happiest hours which they passed together were consequently those when they could converse freely and confidentially. Both were mothers, and both also had lost some of the fair children whom they had borne, in their first infancy; thus they never needed a subject of sympathy and interest, but as they mutually mingled their tears and communicated their sorrows,—those sorrows of the heart which torture alike the lofty head that wears a royal diadem, and the lowly brow that is shaded by a linen coif,—their esteem grew into friendship, and they anticipated with regret the hour of their separation.

Nor did the nobles and ladies of the two courts fail to profit by the cordiality which existed between their respective monarchs. All distrust had vanished; and they mingled freely with each other, frequently even passing the night in the rival city, and careless in what number or in what guise they came and went.

To the tournament succeeded wrestling matches, in which the English proved the victors; and to these again archery, at which noble pastime Henry VIII. himself distanced all competitors, and astonished those who witnessed his feats, both by his strength and skill. At the close of the day's sport the two kings retired to their pavilion, where, after they had pledged each other, Henry, elated by his success, suddenly seized Francis by the collar, exclaiming; "Come, brother, I must have a fall with you;" when the King of France who was an able wrestler, after a short struggle, threw him with great

force. On regaining his legs, Henry would fain have renewed the attack, but some of the nobles of both countries, who were more prudent than their masters, dissuaded him from the attempt; and, still with undiminished cordiality, the two monarchs sat down together at the supper-table.

Nothing appears, indeed, more creditable to both parties than the perfect order, courtesy, and good temper exhibited on either side throughout the whole of the exciting sports in which they were engaged. No single misunderstanding marred the harmony of the two courts; while this perfect good-feeling extended even to the men-at-arms, who vied with their leaders in acts of reciprocal cordiality and kindness.

During the tournament the king of England gave a grand banquet to Francis and his court in the temporary palace without the gates of Guisnes, where no magnificence was spared to do honour to his royal and noble guests. The two kings were seated side by side in the centre of the upper table, while their queens occupied the space immediately in front of them; the English cardinal having a stool on the right hand of Francis, and the Connétable de Bourbon a similar place of honour on the left of the English king. On the following day Francis played the host. He had caused to be erected for the occasion, also without the walls of Guisnes, a splendid pavilion fifty feet square, covered and draped with cloth of gold, and lined with blue velvet, studded with fleurs-de-lis embroidered in Cyprus gold, having four smaller pavilions at the angles similarly adorned; the whole supported by ropes of gold Cyprus thread and

blue silk. But this costly erection was not fated to answer the purpose for which it had been intended, a sudden storm of wind having arisen which wrenched away the tent-pins, broke the cords, and overthrew the whole fabric. Orders were instantly issued to prepare another banquet hall with all speed in one of the faubourgs of the town; and this was accomplished to the great delight of the citizens, who forthwith christened it the Faubourg of the Festival, a name which it still bears.

At the close of these banquets, Wolsey, desirous in his turn to display his magnificence, performed a high and solemn mass in a sumptuous chapel which he had caused to be constructed during the previous night, and which was so richly covered, both within and without, by tapestry, that the material of which it was built could not be distinguished. The altar blazed with light and gems; the choristers of both courts assisted in the ceremony; while the haughty prelate himself stood upon the steps of the shrine, clad in his pontifical robes, and surrounded by a crowd of bishops, priests, and lay attendants. On the right of the altar knelt the two monarchs, having behind them the great nobles of their respective nations, promiscuously grouped together; and on the left their royal consorts, attended by the principal ladies of their several suites. When he had himself communicated, Wolsey, followed by a train of mitred bishops, bore the Eucharist with great solemnity to the prostrate sovereigns; after which he advanced towards the sister-queens, who, before they received it, embraced each other with tears. To them it was at once a holy and a parting pledge; and surely there was no

irreverence in the intrusion of a feeling so pure and sinless even at such a moment.

At the conclusion of the mass the treaty was confirmed, and peace between England and France proclaimed by the heralds of both nations. The betrothal of the dauphin with the princess Mary, the daughter of Henry, was duly solemnized; several more days were spent in jousts and banquets; and, finally, on the 24th of June, the two kings parted as publicly and formally as they had met; and while the English monarch advanced to Guisnes, in order to proceed to Calais and Gravelines, where he had appointed to meet the Emperor after his interview with Francis, that sovereign returned to France, with the full, but erroneous, conviction that thenceforward Henry of England was his firm ally for life.

CHAPTER XV.

[1520—21.]

THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND SUBMITTED TO THE ARBITRATION OF WOLSEY AND LOUISE DE SAVOIE—WOLSEY IS BROUGHT OVER TO THE CAUSE OF THE EMPEROR—CHARLES V. AND HENRY VIII. MEET AT GRAVELINES—CHARLES PROCEEDS TO AIX-LA-CHAPELLE FOR HIS CORONATION—NARROW ESCAPE OF THE FRENCH KING—CHARLES CONVOKES A DIET AT WORMS—LUTHER DEFENDS HIS DOCTRINES—IS OUTLAWED—AND PROTECTED BY THE ELECTOR OF SAXONY—FRANCIS IS RELUCTANT TO COMMENCE THE WAR—INGRATITUDE OF CHARLES V. TO ROBERT DE LA MARK—LA MARK RETURNS TO HIS ALLEGIANCE, AND DEFIES THE EMPEROR—POLICY OF THE POPE—THE SPANIARDS REVOLT—ARROGANCE OF CHARLES V.—THE NAVARRESE SOLICIT HENRI D'ALBRET TO CLAIM HIS CROWN—FRANCIS SUPPLIES HIM WITH TROOPS—DEFENCE OF THE CITADEL OF PAMPELUNA—IGNATIUS LOYOLA—SURRENDER OF PAMPELUNA TO THE FRENCH—IMPRUDENCE OF THE FRENCH GENERAL—HE ENTERS SPAIN—THE CASTILIANS RISE AGAINST HIM—LESPARE IS DEFEATED AND MADE PRISONER—THE EMPEROR MARCHES AN ARMY AGAINST THE DUKE DE GUELDRES—THE RIVAL SOVEREIGNS APPEAL TO HENRY VIII.—THE DUKE DE GUELDRES SUES FOR A TRUCE—FRANCIS FORTIFIES HIS FRONTIERS—DUPLICITY OF THE EMPEROR—THE COUNT DE NASSAU TAKES MENZON—A CONFERENCE OPENED AT CALAIS—THE POPE AND WOLSEY MEET AT BRUGES—BAD FAITH OF LEO X.—INDIGNATION OF FRANCIS AGAINST THE ENGLISH KING—HIS SELF-RELIANCE—BAYARD DEFENDS MEZIÈRES—FRANCIS ENCOUNTERS THE ENEMY NEAR VALENCIENNES, BUT SUFFERS THEM TO ESCAPE—THE COUNT DE NASSAU SUMMONS BAYARD TO SURRENDER—SPIRITED REPLY OF THE GOOD KNIGHT—A RUSE DE GUERRE—THE IMPERIALISTS RAISE THE SIEGE—THE BOTTLE OF WINE—THE RECOMPENSE OF BAYARD—GRATITUDE OF THE CITIZENS OF MEZIÈRES TO THE GOOD KNIGHT—FRANCIS MARCHES UPON PICARDY—CHARLES JOINS HIS ARMY AT VALENCIENNES—FRANCIS CONFERS THE COMMAND OF THE VAN-GUARD UPON THE DUKE D'ALENÇON—INDIGNATION OF BOURBON—FRANCIS RETURNS TO FRANCE, AND DISBANDS HIS ARMY.

CHAPTER XV.

[1520-21.]

No public business of importance had after all been transacted between the two sovereigns at the gorgeous meeting of the Golden Camp, for the preliminaries of the negotiation which was signed at Ardres on the 6th of June in the previous year, had already been arranged between the ministers on either side; and it was consequently only the specious pretext for an outlay which exhausted the treasuries of both nations, and left the nobles impoverished with debt. The betrothal of the dauphin and the princess Mary was, as we have elsewhere stated, solemnized; but this only added another opportunity of display to those by which it had been preceded. The engagement of France to pay to England the sum of a million of crowns, at a hundred thousand francs yearly, until the period of the marriage, was ratified; and the differences between England and Scotland were submitted to the arbitration of Madame d'Angoulême and Wolsey.

Francis had, however, miscalculated the effect which had been produced upon the mind of his brother-monarch during the three weeks they had passed together; for he

was not aware how craftily Charles, even in the brief visit which he had recently made to England, had worked upon the mind of the Cardinal-legate, alike through his avarice and his ambition. Although considerably the senior of Leo X. in years, Wolsey, accustomed to see all things bend before his will, never appeared to apprehend that he might be outlived by that pontiff; and accordingly, aware that from his position as Emperor of Germany Charles must necessarily exercise considerable influence over the petty princes throughout the empire, he lent a greedy ear to his assurances that he would do all in his power to secure his accession to the popedom; while, as a guarantee of his sincerity, Charles, in addition to many rich presents, conferred upon the prelate the two bishoprics of Badajoz and Valencia, in Castile; and, this done, informed him of the uneasiness which he experienced at the probable effects of the meeting at Ardres. Wolsey, however, who well knew that Henry, in his love of pleasure and display, would leave all important measures in his own hands, soon succeeded in relieving the mind of the emperor of this apprehension; and, moreover, induced him to arrange a second interview with Henry before the return of the latter to England.

It was, consequently, in accordance with this promise that Charles embarked at Cologne and proceeded to Gravelines, accompanied by the Lady-regent of the Low Countries, Marguerite de Savoie, where he made such hasty preparations for the reception of his royal guest as were practicable; and was joined on the 10th of July by Henry VIII. and a portion of his court, among whom the

cardinal was prominent. Neither Madame de Savoie nor himself spared care or flattery in order to gain over both the legate and his royal master. With the first they had, however, little difficulty, for all Wolsey's dreams were now full of the triple crown; while Henry had so long accustomed himself to refer all state questions to his minister, that he was soon induced to violate the pledges which he had given to the unsuspicious Francis, and to ally himself to the interests of the emperor. His vanity was, moreover, flattered by the assurance of Charles that he considered him to be entrusted with the preservation of the peace of Europe; and by his offer to accept him as his arbitrator in all differences which might arise between himself and the French king, as Francis had already done.

After having remained the guest of the emperor and his aunt during several days, the English monarch urged them to return with him to Calais, and to pay a visit to Queen Katherine, who was awaiting them there with her court. The invitation was accepted; and while Marguerite de Savoie used all her blandishments to secure the same influence over the mind of the English queen which her imperial relative had effected over that of Henry, Charles, even while he appeared to be entirely engrossed by the festivities which were taking place about him, was cautiously and unobtrusively maturing his plans and strengthening his interests. Before his departure, a grand entertainment took place in his honour and that of Madame de Savoie, at which the whole of the two courts were to be present; and in order to give all possible brilliancy to the festival, the king had caused a

spacious amphitheatre to be erected, lined with blue velvet, and studded with stars of silver; while above the thrones destined to the three sovereigns, and the fauteuil of the regent, a sun of burnished gold blazed out in the lustre of hundreds of tapers of pink wax, a moon of frosted silver facing the daïs upon which they were placed.

By a curious coincidence, however, the same accident occurred to this building as to the banqueting-pavilion of Francis at Ardres; for, just as the preparations were concluded, and the guests about to assemble, a violent tempest supervened which overthrew the whole fabric, and rendered it of no avail. The revellers consoled themselves as best they might for this disappointment; and after a few days more had been consumed in covert business and open pleasure, the sovereigns once more parted; Henry returning to England, and Charles proceeding through Flanders and Brabant to Aix-la-Chapelle; where his coronation as King of the Romans and Emperor of Germany took place on the 23d of October, with a pomp exceeding any which had before been witnessed upon such an occasion.

Francis, on removing his camp from the Field of Cloth of Gold, had hastened to Amboise to inform Madame d'Angoulême of the supposed success of his expedition, and thence removed with his court to Romorantin to celebrate the remaining winter festivities; when an accident befel him on the evening of Twelfth Night (1521), which had nearly put an end to his existence. Having ascertained that the king-cake[1] had been cut at

[1] It was the fashion in France to cause a bean to be concealed in a large cake, which was divided and distributed among the guests,

the house of the Count de St. Pol, and that the mimic sovereign had been elected, Francis arranged with those about him that they would despatch a formal defiance to the hotel of the count, and declare their intention of doing battle against the usurper. The message was received in the same spirit of mirth that it had been sent; and as the snow lay deep upon the ground, the besieged party lost no time in supplying their garrison with the means of repelling the attack. Immense snowballs, eggs, and apples, were laid in heaps after the fashion of ammunition; and for a time, the assailants being armed with the same missiles, the sport went gaily on; but, unfortunately, before its close, as the king's followers, pursuing a temporary advantage, were about to force the door of the hotel, some individual within was ill-advised enough to throw a burning brand which he had snatched from the hearth through one of the windows, which fell upon the head of Francis, and inflicted a deep and serious wound.

For several days his life was in great danger, and his surgeons found it necessary to remove the whole of his hair, of which, from its extreme beauty and luxuriance, he had been very vain; but despite this mortification he withstood all the remonstrances of his mother, who was anxious to punish the author of this misfortune, and would not permit his identity to be ascertained; declaring, with a generosity which did him honour, that the blow, heavy as it was, had not only been inflicted in sport, but that it was the mere effect of accident which

the fortunate finder of the bean being declared king for the evening, ceremoniously attended whithersoever he went, and his commands implicitly obeyed.

rendered him the sufferer; and reminding her that when a sovereign condescended to engage in the pastimes of a child, like that child he must be content to pay the penalty of his folly.

From this period he never again suffered his hair to grow, but wore it clipped close; a fashion which was immediately adopted by the whole of the courtiers.

Despite the increasing jealousy of Francis and the emperor, neither the one nor the other was as yet anxious to terminate the peace. Charles—in addition to the discontent which he had to encounter in Spain, where his subjects had declared themselves resolved to support their political claims—was, moreover, called upon to contend against a formidable fermentation in Germany, occasioned by the rapid progress of the Lutheran doctrines. The pope had fulminated a bull of excommunication against the bold and zealous reformer on the 15th of June of the previous year, and a great portion of his writings had been condemned as heretical; a proceeding which Luther had retorted by publicly burning the papal document; while Charles himself had no sooner assumed the silver crown, than he had, in his turn, convoked a diet of the empire at Worms, in order, as he declared, "to occupy himself in suppressing the progress of the new and dangerous opinions which disturbed the peace of Germany, and threatened to overthrow the religion of their ancestors." But, notwithstanding this measure, it is not the less certain that he sent an honourable safe-conduct to Luther, and invited him to Worms; where he met with a cordial reception, not only from the bulk of the people, but also from

many of the greatest persons of the empire; a proof that his principles had already planted themselves deeply in the public mind. He was even permitted to declare and defend them before the diet, which he did with a calmness and courage that sufficiently demonstrated the righteousness of his cause; after which he was permitted to return under the protection of the same herald-at-arms by whom he had been conducted to the city; although the diet saw fit after his departure to fulminate against him a condemnation declaring him an outlaw, as being an excommunicated heretic; from the consequences of which severity he was saved by the Elector of Saxony, who caused him to be carried off by a party of men in masks, and conducted to the fortress of Wartburg, where he remained in safety for nine months, although his friends were as ignorant of his retreat as his enemies.

Francis was not unaware of the difficulties with which the new emperor had to contend; and satisfied by what he had already seen, that should he be enabled to adjust them, he must inevitably become a dangerous rival, he could not restrain his desire to curtail his power; but he was still unwilling to be the first to declare an hostility which must, as its first and inevitable consequence, separate him for a time from the society of Madame de Châteaubriand, and exhaust the resources which he required to meet the more personal expenses necessitated by the expensive pleasures in which he loved to indulge; and accordingly, instead of taking high ground, and meeting his adversary in a catholic spirit, he compromised with his pride by subjecting him to

petty annoyances which could only ultimately tend to engender an European warfare.

Charles had doubly falsified his royal word; first as regarded Navarre, where he had failed to redeem the pledge almost voluntarily given; and secondly as to Naples, which kingdom he still held, without evincing the slightest disposition to abandon any portion of his tenure; while M. de la Mark, Duke de Gueldres, the old and faithful ally of France, who had been for a season diverted from his allegiance, made loud and bitter complaints of the disloyalty of the emperor in neglecting to fulfil his promises; and at length entreated the support of France in his attempt at self-defence. He considered himself deeply aggrieved, inasmuch as his right to the Duchy of Bouillon, which he inherited from an ancestor, had been disputed; and the Sieur d'Emery had taken one of the cities by force of arms without any remonstrance from Charles, who, moreover, refused to interfere in his behalf further than by promises which he afterwards neglected; even permitting the Chancellor of Brabant, who had been bribed to that effect, to declare against his claim; whereupon De la Mark proceeded to Sedan, and demanded an audience, wherein he declared that if justice was not done, he would abandon the cause of a sovereign who had so ill repaid his services during his election.

The emperor, indignant at this threat, heightened the misunderstanding by retorting that the Duke de Gueldres was at perfect liberty to act as he saw fit, his adhesion being of small importance to either party; and Louise de Savoie was no sooner informed of this outbreak than she wrote an autograph letter to the discon-

tented noble, inviting him to return to his allegiance to Francis. The proposal was at once accepted, to the great regret of Marguerite de Savoie, who estimated at its real value the friendship of so brave and zealous a noble, and who spared no exertions to induce him to retract his resolution.

The duke was, however, firm; his pride had been wounded and his dignity compromised; and he accordingly presented himself at Romorantin, where Francis was still confined by his wound; and after expressing his regret for his momentary defalcation, ultimately placed in his hands not only his person but also his possessions; entreating him to afford him help, succour, and assistance to revenge the grievous wrong which he had experienced from the emperor; a step which he had no sooner taken than Charles, who became convinced of his error, endeavoured to regain him by representing that what had been done was effected without his authority, and that all might yet be rectified; but the concession came too late; the duke had suffered more than he was ready to forgive, and was resolved to regain by force what he had lost by fraud.

This was the last drop which caused the vase of the French king's patience to overflow; or, perhaps, it was the first plausible pretext he could seize upon to justify a commencement of those hostilities which he had previously deferred. He consequently accepted the renewed assurances of fealty proffered by the duke; and so soon as the latter had effected the reconciliation, he sent an envoy to the emperor—who was then at Worms attending the diet which he had invoked of all the princes and delegates

from the free towns of Germany, to suppress the doctrines of Luther—to defy him before the assembly; a proceeding which, instituted as it was by a subject, was treated with disdain alike by Charles and his nobility.

Nevertheless, the duke lost no time in following up his demonstration; and the Marquis de Fleuranges, his elder son, in opposition to the express commands of Francis, levied in France and the neighbouring nations a force of four or five thousand infantry, and between fourteen and fifteen hundred mounted troops, and besieged Vireton, a small town in Luxembourg, on the confines of Lorraine. He was subsequently, however, induced to raise the siege, and to disband his little army, at the request of Francis, to whom Henry VIII. despatched an envoy, entreating him not to enter into hostilities with the emperor, but to submit to his arbitration any misunderstanding which might have arisen.

The sovereign-pontiff was, meanwhile, less pacifically disposed than the sovereigns of Germany, France, and England. He affected to smile at the uneasiness evinced by Charles at the progress of the religious schism, declaring that after all it was a mere monkish quarrel, which might be easily and effectually terminated; and, anxious only for the aggrandizement of the Holy See, he continued to exert his utmost efforts to weaken the power of the rival monarchs by turning them against each other, although himself undecided for the time whose interests he should adopt. His profuse expenditure had compelled him to levy exorbitant subsidies on all sides; and his ultimate ambition was, either to re-unite to the States of the Church the provinces of Parma and

Placenza, now held by the French as a portion of the duchy of Milan, or to obtain the cession of some part of the Neapolitan kingdom from the Spaniards.

The crafty pope was for the moment careless in which measure he succeeded, but in order to secure either the one or the other, he commenced a secret negotiation with both monarchs; proposing to Charles to enter into a league with him for driving the French from Italy, on condition that the duchy of Milan should be restored to Francisco Sforza,[1] and Parma, Placenza and Ferrara ceded to the Holy See; and a treaty to this effect was signed actually between the contracting parties of the 8th of May; while at the same time he suggested to Francis the expediency of their conjointly attacking the Spaniards in the kingdom of Naples, expelling them thence, and then dividing the country by attaching all that portion of Campania Felix which extended to the Garigliano, to the States of the Church; and securing the remainder of the kingdom to the second son of Francis, subject to the guardianship of an apostolical legate until his majority. In this proposition he was equally successful, and a second treaty was signed between himself and the French king; M. de Lautrec permitting six thousand Swiss troops in the pay of the pope to traverse the territories of the Milanese, on the understanding that they were to be employed in the execution of the said treaty. Although these negotiations had been pursued with the greatest secresy,

[1] Francisco-Maria Sforza, the brother of Maximilian duke of Milan, was restored to his possessions by Charles V; and died in 1535, without issue. At his death the emperor took possession of the duchy of Milan, which passed to his own successors.

Lautrec, who had always been upon bad terms with the court of Rome, nevertheless began ere long to suspect the sincerity of the pope; and induced Francis, to whom he communicated his misgivings, to delay the ratification of the league.

Meanwhile the revolt in Spain spread far and fast; and the emperor accused the French king of secretly encouraging these intestine troubles by sheltering his enemies. He also reiterated his demand for the restitution of the duchy of Burgundy, which he affected to declare had descended to himself through the princess Mary, and had only been usurped by Louis XI; claiming a sovereign right over the province, and declaring that Francis held no title there beyond that of his feudatory. While, however, he put forward these pretensions, he was unable to maintain his authority in Spain; tumult and misrule existed on all sides; the jealousy which subsisted between his Flemish and his Spanish subjects was daily aggravated by new outrages; and he found his influence almost at an end throughout the kingdom.

Under these circumstances Henri d'Albret, king of Navarre, began once more to indulge the hope of recovering his crown. The disaffected party in Spain had applied to Francis to allow the young sovereign to enter Navarre, assuring him that it would prove an easy conquest, the cardinal-governor, Adrian, Bishop of Tortosa,[1] having

[1] Adrian, Bishop of Tortosa, was a Dutchman by birth; and was subsequently Pope under the designation of Adrian VI. He succeeded Leo X. in 1522; and died in the following year. He had been preceptor to Charles V; and shared the regency of Spain with the Cardinal de Ximénès.

withdrawn all the troops from that province to the interior of Spain. At the same time the Navarrese themselves invited their legitimate monarch to vindicate his rights, and to relieve them from the tyranny of an usurper; assuring him that if he would only appear among them, "the very stones, mountains, and trees, would take up arms in his cause."

Thus Francis was, without any belligerent demonstration on his own part, suddenly furnished with a plausible pretext for indulging his jealousy of Charles; but still, conscious of the immense responsibility of taking the initiative in a war which might, before its conclusion, convulse all Europe, he desired that the expedition should be undertaken in the name of Henri d'Albret himself, and that he should not be held personally responsible for its results. To these terms the young king, eager to repossess his territories, gladly assented; and an army, under the command of Madame de Châteaubriand's second brother, the marquis de Lesparre, who as a relative of the deposed sovereign was supposed to act only in his name and by his authority, was speedily organized, in which M. de Guise, the brother of the Duke de Lorraine, took the command of the lansquenets. No time was lost in marching upon Navarre, where the first efforts of the Marquis proved eminently successful; and he proceeded without any important check until he reached Pampeluna, where he was received with transport by the citizens, but repulsed by the garrison of the citadel; which, although the viceroy had considered it impossible to march a sufficient force to its relief to insure its safety, held out during several days,

through the extraordinary courage of a young officer, who in this moment of peril assumed the command, and infused new energy into the failing hearts of the soldiery.

Ignatius Loyola, whose name was destined to become so famous as the founder of the Jesuits, was at that period a military hero; and it was only when those over whom he had assumed the command insisted upon a capitulation that he was reluctantly obliged to yield; but even then he could not be brought to consent to a measure against which his high and martial spirit revolted, until he obtained the consent of his companions that he should be present when the terms of the capitulation were adjusted; and he had no sooner found that they were so arbitrary and severe as to involve the honour of his cause, than he abruptly terminated the conference, declaring that he would rather be buried under the ruins of the citadel than lend his countenance to such a compromise.

Hostilities were consequently resumed by the French, against which merely individual valour could not contend; and during an assault which he headed in person, Loyola had one leg broken by a cannon shot, and the other crushed by a stone from the walls. As he fell, the hopes of his followers fell with him; they attempted no further resistance; and Pampeluna surrendered, involving in its capture the whole kingdom of Navarre.

Had Lesparre been as prudent as he was bold, he might have followed up his advantage, and secured his conquest; but, eager to extend his triumph, he was rash enough to enter Spain, upon which the great nobles of Castile became alarmed, and urging the people to forego

for a time their intestine quarrels in order to expel the common enemy, succeeded in organizing a powerful force, with which they marched to Logrogno, already in a state of siege through the headlong impetuosity of Lesparre; attacked his army, weakened by the disbanding of a portion of its infantry, which an ill-timed economy had induced him to dispense with, under the impression that he should not encounter greater difficulties in Spain than those which he had just so happily overcome in Navarre; and, moreover, rendered less efficient by a want of discipline engendered by success.

The attack of the Spaniards, however, infuriated by the dread of a new tyrant in the person of the French king, who was even less bound to their national interests than Charles; and the fact that they came fresh into the field against a body of harassed and toilworn men, soon caused the marquis to repent his error. An engagement ensued which terminated in the total rout of the French forces, who were not only compelled to abandon the siege of Pampeluna, but even to meet the enemy a second time in the plain of Squiros, where their fate was decided, and Lesparre himself about to be made prisoner, when, resolved not to survive a disgrace he had so little apprehended, he abandoned all further authority over his bewildered army, and spurred his horse into the very thickest of the enemy's ranks, in order to die upon the field. He was not, however, fated to succeed even in this melancholy attempt; for, although covered with wounds, and with his casque beaten into his face by a blow from a mace which deprived him of his sight for ever, he was made captive by his enemies, together with

most of his principal officers; and thus again he was condemned to feel that Navarre was lost.

Meanwhile, enraged by the insolence of the Duke de Gueldres, the emperor despatched the Count de Nassau to invade and devastate his territories; a command which was obeyed and executed with a barbarity revolting to every principle of dignity and humanity. Both the emperor and Francis at this juncture appealed to Henry VIII, each declaring the other to be the aggressor, and calling upon him to assist in revenging their wrongs; but the English king, who was not sorry to see them thus mutually undermining their strength without any exertion on his own part, contented himself by entreating both the one and the other not lightly to involve themselves in so serious a war, and to leave everything to his mediation. As the two monarchs could hope for no more efficient assistance they agreed to this proposition, and accordingly consented to open a conference at Calais on the 4th of August, under the presidence of Wolsey; Francis only demanding that the pontifical legates should be present, who would, as he believed, (unconscious as he was that Leo X. had abandoned his interests,) compel justice for him, should any necessity arise for their intervention. The French king, moreover, enjoined the Duke de Gueldres to lay down his arms; a command which was obeyed, not because Robert de la Mark had forgotten the wrong which he had experienced from Charles, but because he believed that all intention of hostility towards him had now been abandoned by the emperor. He, however, fearfully deceived himself; for he had no sooner disbanded a great

portion of his army, and rendered himself defenceless, than the Count de Nassau pursued his advantage with merciless ferocity, and he found himself compelled to sue for a truce, which was granted because it served only to involve him in still greater ruin; for so soon as it expired Charles lost no time in seizing the whole of his territories, and in marching a division of his army to the French frontier.

Before this movement was effected, however, Francis had felt the imperative necessity of placing his kingdom in an efficient state of defence; and, after having strengthened the frontier of Burgundy, had turned his attention to those of Champagne and Picardy which were totally unguarded. He conferred the government of the former upon the Duke d'Alençon, the husband of his sister; and that of the latter upon the Duke de Vendôme; and this done, he commanded the Admiral Bonnivet to lead a new force into Navarre, to revenge the insult received by Lesparre; and then he began assiduously to recruit and organize an army to resist the reprisals of the emperor which he was aware must be the result of such a measure.

Meanwhile the Count de Nassau had been apprised of the approach of the Duke d'Alençon with a force of twenty thousand men; while, having passed the French frontier, (despite all the asseverations of his imperial master, that he had no hostile intentions towards France,) he was laying siege to the city of Mouzon; yet, notwithstanding this practical illustration of his insincerity, Charles, who was then at Brussels, on learning that the French had in their turn intruded on his own territories, had the duplicity to exclaim:

"Thank God that it was not I who commenced this war, and that it is the King of France who seeks to aggrandize me; for in a short time I will be a pauper emperor, or he shall be a pauper monarch."

M. de Nassau began his invasion under fortunate auspices, for Mouzon possessing neither provisions, ammunition, nor garrison, was totally unable to resist so formidable an enemy; its whole armed force consisting only of a single company of infantry, under the command of the Seigneur de Montmoreau;[1] who, hopeless as was the contest, declared that he would die within the walls rather than surrender; but finding that neither his troops nor the citizens themselves would make an effort to save the town, he was compelled to capitulate; and after having received a solemn pledge that the lives of all should be spared, he suffered the gates to be opened, and delivered up the citadel.

During this time the Chancellor Duprat, the Maréchal de Chabannes, and Jean de Selve, had reached Calais, where they were to meet the ambassadors of the emperor, in order, through the mediation of Wolsey, to effect, if possible, a reconciliation between their two sovereigns. The cardinal was, however, aware that Leo X. had abandoned the cause of Francis for that of Charles; and not content with furthering his own interests by consulting those of the latter, he even so far laid aside all disguise as to visit him at Bruges during the conference, where he was received with the same state and splendour as though he had been the sovereign of

[1] The Seigneur de Montmoreau was Master of the Horse in Brittany, and Governor of Mouzon.

England instead of its minister; while he on his part declared that all he required to ascertain was, which of the parties had been the original aggressor, as Henry VIII. must, in conformity to the treaties into which he had entered, declare against the first who had disregarded them. M. de Chièvres was recently dead, and had in his last moments expressed his regret at the renewal of hostilities; but the imperial ministers, disregarding the league of Noyon which he had negotiated, nevertheless advanced claims which were so exorbitant that they amounted to a declaration of war, and were at once repulsed by the French envoys.

Charles was supported in these arrogant pretensions by a consciousness of the partiality of the mediators, a bias in his favour of which he did not fail to take advantage; and thus once more he was bold enough to require the restitution of the Duchy of Burgundy, which, had it been conceded, would have given him entrance into the heart of France; and to demand to be freed from the homage which his ancestors had done to the French sovereigns for Flanders and Artois; and which, by the treaty of Noyon, he had personally pledged himself to continue. Nothing overt was consequently accomplished; but the crafty cardinal availed himself of the opportunity to give a secret pledge to the emperor that Henry should declare in his favour, and assist him during the course of the following year with a force of forty thousand men. He, moreover, betrothed Charles to the Princess Mary, who still being the only child of Henry, began to be considered as the probable heir to the crown; utterly regardless of the fact that he

had in person previously performed the ceremony of affiance between her and the dauphin of France at Ardres. Charles was dazzled by the prospect of a new crown, and eagerly entered into the arrangement; while Wolsey himself saw in it another bond to knit more closely his own interests and those of his imperial ally.

Francis was not deceived by the result of this conference; but at once discovered that he had been duped, and must prepare to defend himself against other enemies than the emperor. Of the bad faith of Henry and his minister he no longer entertained a doubt, while his suspicion of the double-dealing of the pope increased from day to day. Nevertheless, the spirit of the king rose with the difficulties by which he saw himself surrounded.

"All the European sovereigns conspire against me;" he said haughtily; "but I shall find means to answer them. I care little either for the emperor, or for my cousin of England; my frontier of Picardy is fortified, and the Flemish are poor soldiers. As for Italy, I will take charge of that; while I pay the Swiss they will fight for me, and I have sent to summon them here with their pikes."

Among the most important places which were likely to be first attacked by the enemy was Mézières, which many of the king's advisers counselled him to burn down, and by destroying the environs to starve out the army of M. de Nassau, whose supplies would thus be cut off. This measure was justified, as they declared, by the impossibility of introducing a sufficient garrison within the walls before it was besieged; an event which

the proximity of the imperial troops rendered every hour probable. Bayard, however, seeing that Francis hesitated to sanction so extreme a measure, seized the fortunate moment, and energetically discountenanced such a proceeding.

"You are told that the place is too weak to resist, Sire;" he said boldly; "no place is weak which is defended by brave men. Let the old walls stand, and permit me to assist in their defence."

"To yourself, I will confide the city;" replied Francis, struck with the confidence of the good knight; "take with you whom you will, and strike for the honour of France, and the dignity of your monarch."

Without losing another instant he then instructed the Duke d'Alençon to supply the little army of Bayard with all which he might require, and despatched M. de Lorge to provision and arm the city, while the brave Pierre Terrail summoned about him all his chosen comrades; but as his name ever acted like a spell upon the chivalry of France, he soon found himself moreover surrounded by a host of gallant men who were anxious to acquire glory by fighting at his side. All pride of rank was for the time forgotten by these noble volunteers; and Bayard, with natural self-gratulation, welcomed to his ranks some of the haughtiest blood throughout the kingdom. Among the first who presented themselves were the Seigneur de Montmoreau, and his lieutenant M. de Boncar, each with a thousand lances, and both eager to avenge their defeat at Mouzon. The flower of the nobility of Dauphiny followed; and even Anne de Montmorency, the favourite of Francis, did not disdain

to swell the list of his subordinates. The city was no longer defenceless; its walls bristled with spears; and its strength lay not so much in the glittering breast-pieces which flashed in the sunlight, as in the bold hearts that beat beneath them.

While the garrison of Mézières was thus assembling, Francis—who had been sojourning at Rheims, where his army was daily reinforced by the arrival both of horse and foot, including several strong parties of Swiss mercenaries—proceeded by Guise into the Cambresis; and on the 22d of October overtook the forces of the Count de Nassau between Cambray and Valenciennes, on their way to the latter city, where the imperialist general was about to retire for a time to rest and refresh the troops who were suffering greatly from fatigue. La Tremouille and Chabannes were eager to attack the imperialists, and strongly urged this measure upon the king; reminding him that the enemy had still three leagues to travel over the plain before they could shelter themselves behind the walls of a fortress; but Francis, by some strange perversity, refused to listen to the suggestion until the whole of his army should have crossed the river, and the thick fog which then hung over them be dispersed. It was in vain that they implored him to recant his resolution; he remained firm, and M. de Nassau was consequently enabled to make good his escape with his whole force.

It is certain, according to Du Bellay, that had the king authorized the proposed attack he would easily have defeated the retreating force, and thus materially crippled the resources of the emperor; a fact of which he became subsequently so conscious that he was overwhelmed with

grief, and during the night most imprudently departed for Flanders, attended by a hundred horse, thus abandoning the rest of the army. "That day;" says the same chronicler, in a burst of patriotic grief; "God had delivered our enemy into our hands, and we would not accept the offering; a refusal which has since cost us dear."

Bayard was, meanwhile, less supine. He caused all the inhabitants of Mézières who could not be rendered available in case of siege to retire beyond the walls; after which he demolished the drawbridge, and convoked an assembly of the sheriffs, whom he compelled to make oath that they would never urge a surrender, but defend the town even to the death. "And if our provisions should fail us, gentlemen;" he said gaily; "we will devour our horses and our boots."

The calm confidence of the good knight inspired the citizens with new courage, and they all swore to perish rather than capitulate. He then turned his attention to the walls, and busied himself in repairing the old breaches, which had been suffered to remain in a state of daily increasing dilapidation, not only working himself, but even distributing among the labourers the sum of six thousand crowns from his own purse. He appeared to be ubiquitous, for while one asserted that he saw him at the gate of the town, another declared that he was upon the rampart; while a third affirmed that he had passed him in one of the streets of the city. He felt that the preservation of the place had been entrusted to him; and while he was indulgent to all under his command, he was inexorable towards himself.

Bayard, in fact, felt a conviction that not a moment

must be lost, and his prescience had not deceived him; the city was shortly afterwards invested; and while Seckingen at the head of fifteen thousand men attacked it on one bank of the Meuse, the Count de Nassau with twenty thousand more threatened it from the other.

Ere long, however, a herald-at-arms appeared before the gates and summoned Bayard to surrender, declaring that the place could not hold out against the imperial forces; and that, in consideration of the high and noble chivalry which was contained within its walls, the imperial generals were reluctant to take it by assault, and thus tarnish his personal honour and that of his noble companions; while they moreover feared for the life of one like himself, who, should he perish defeated, would by such a death efface the memory of all his great and heroic deeds; while, on the contrary, they were willing to concede to him such honourable terms as must tend to satisfy his self-respect.

Bayard with some difficulty compelled himself to hear this harangue to an end; after which he declared that he was astounded by the great courtesy of the besieging generals, of whom he himself knew nothing; and then, assuming a more haughty attitude, he added: "Friend Herald, return to your camp, and tell your leaders that the king my sovereign could have sent many more efficient persons than myself to defend his city and his frontier; but that since he has seen fit to honour me with the trust, I hope, by the help of God, to keep it for him for such a length of time that your masters will be more weary of maintaining the siege than I shall be of defending my post. I am no longer a child to be deluded by

high-sounding phrases; and therefore say to them, moreover, that if I ever leave the city which has been confided to me, it shall be over a bridge of their own bodies, and those of their followers."

This fearless answer to his summons exasperated M. de Nassau, who immediately issued an order for the attack. His artillery was pointed against the walls upon two separate sides, but the fire was steadily and unceasingly returned; when suddenly the volunteers who had been brought to Mézières by M. de Montmoreau, being inexperienced in warfare, became panic struck, wavered, and fled. Some of the French soldiery endeavoured to rally them, but Bayard instantly ordered that they should be allowed to escape over the walls without molestation. "Let them go;" he said calmly; "we shall be stronger without them; for cravens such as these are not worthy to win glory by the side of braver men."

Meanwhile the good knight became conscious that the division of troops under Seckingen, having secured a more elevated position, harassed his own followers more than those upon the other bank, and he resolved to have recourse to stratagem in order to induce him to change his ground; a measure which he was the more anxious to adopt from the fact that his provisions were rapidly decreasing, and that his garrison was beginning to suffer from sickness.

He had ascertained from one of his emissaries that altercations had arisen in the enemy's camp, where the Count de Nassau and Seckingen were contending against each other for the supreme command of the besieging army; and in order to aggravate this mis-

understanding he addressed a letter to the Duke de Gueldres, in which he stated that, aware of his regard for the Sire de Seckingen, he had thought it advisable to inform him that if his friend did not speedily shift his position he and all his camp would be cut to pieces within four-and-twenty hours, as a force of twelve thousand Swiss and eight hundred horsemen would fall upon him at dawn; while he should himself make a sally from the town, by which means he would be enclosed, and could have no hope of escape; adding, moreover, that as the duke had assured him some months back that M. de Seckingen might be induced to join the cause of France, he should be glad to see so desirable a measure accomplished, and to welcome so brave a soldier to the banner of the lilies. This done, he committed the letter to the care of a peasant, to whom he gave a crown, desiring him to carry it forthwith to Messire Robert de la Mark at Sedan, and to tell him that it was sent by Captain Bayard.

As a natural consequence the letter fell into the hands of one of Seckingen's followers, who forthwith conveyed the messenger to the tent of his general; when the partizan, believing that the Count de Nassau meant to sacrifice him, immediately struck his tents, and abandoned the advantageous position which he had hitherto occupied. This movement could not be effected without attracting the attention of the Count, who instantly despatched a messenger to represent to Seckingen the probable effect of such a proceeding, endangering as it did the total failure of their operations; but he received only a haughty answer. "Tell M. de Nassau;" was the reply; "that I shall act as I see fit, having no inclination to remain

and be butchered for his pleasure; but that I shall take up my quarters beside his own, and we shall see after we have met who will remain master of the field."

The count, who after this message of defiance felt persuaded that his late comrade Seckingen was in fact passing the Meuse with the intention of attacking him, drew out his troops in order of battle; an attitude which was immediately imitated by the irritated Seckingen, and an engagement was about to ensue, when the assembled officers on both sides interfered, and prevented the collision. Nevertheless the two generals continued implacable; they haughtily refused to condescend to any explanation; mutually distrustful, each looked upon the other as a covert enemy; and on the following day they separately raised the siege.

During an entire week the officers of Charles found it impossible to reconcile the two adversaries, but at length they were induced to forego their quarrel; upon which Seckingen entered Picardy, burning and devastating all that he encountered on his way until he reached Guise, where he halted; while M. de Nassau on his side shaped his course northward, carrying terror wherever he encamped, putting to death such of his soldiers as had served under his rival, betraying his suspicion of every one about him, and committing a thousand acts of idle and undiscriminating cruelty. His army resembled a beleaguered city; a secret police was organized, and his spies invaded even the tents and private correspondence of his officers; executions were of daily occurrence, and a spirit of terror and consternation pervaded the whole of the troops. The sword of Damocles hung suspended

above the camp, and none knew upon whose head it would next fall.

During this panic Bayard had made a sortie which proved highly successful, as it increased the confusion in the ranks of M. de Nassau, while at the same time it afforded an opportunity for a powerful reinforcement to be introduced into the beleaguered city, and the approach of M. d'Alençon to within three leagues of the gates. Nevertheless the imperial general, reluctant to abandon an enterprise in which he had flattered himself with success, was unwilling to raise the siege until he could by some method convince himself that the garrison were no longer in danger of famine; upon which a veteran captain, an old companion in arms of Bayard, who had spent his whole life in the service of the French in Italy, but who had now been gained over to the cause of the emperor, volunteered to despatch a trumpet to the fortress to request a bottle of wine from the commandant for the sake of their ancient friendship.

"Tell the good knight;" he said to the messenger, as he was preparing to set forth; "that it is for captain Gros-Jean of Picardy, who will drink health and long life to him in his own wine, whether it be old or new."

To this application Bayard replied by sending two bottles, one of each description named, which he caused the envoy himself to fetch from the cellar, where he showed him huge casks all filled; desiring him to assure his master that he was welcome to repeat the pledge whenever he needed to do so, as the garrison of Mézières had enough and to spare during the time that the siege was likely to hold out.

The envoy returned, and by reporting what he had seen and heard, fully convinced M. de Nassau that the city was as impregnable as ever; little suspecting that the barrels in the fortress cellar were merely water-casks, and that the wine so freely given had been part of the lading of three wagons, which the French had only the previous evening succeeded in introducing within the gates.

In consequence of this conviction he at once struck his tents, leaving Bayard master of the city after a resistance of three weeks; during which time, although no battle had been fought, the good knight had, nevertheless, evinced so much courage and military science, and had caused so great a loss among the imperial troops, that Francis at once felt he could no longer leave such eminent merit unrecompensed, and forthwith conferred on him the collar of the order of Philip Augustus, and gave him the command of a hundred men-at-arms; a prerogative hitherto monopolised by individuals of princely rank.

When the imperial troops had withdrawn, Bayard, who had no further occupation within the walls whence he had driven his assailants, prepared for his return to the royal camp, amid the shouts and benedictions of the citizens whom he had saved from plunder and outrage; the people crowded about him, the bells of the churches and convents rang out a joyous peal; and thenceforward the whole population of Mézières religiously observed with prayer and festivity the anniversary of their deliverance.

The letter in which Francis announced to his mother the relief of Mézières was even more inconsequent than

a former one to which we have already made allusion; while not content with expressing himself in terms wholly inconsistent with his kingly dignity, he even so far forgot his respect for sacred things as to entreat his mother to cause thanksgivings to be offered up to the Almighty, with the irreverend addition, "*car sans poynt de fote, il a montré ce coup qu'yl est bon François.*" After so blasphemous and presumptuous an expression as this, our wonder ceases that there should have been a blight upon his arms!

The siege of Mézières once happily terminated, the French king proceeded in pursuit of the imperial troops; who, baffled in Champagne, were ravaging Picardy, and spreading terror in every direction. The fortresses which they had destroyed on the frontier of the former province were hastily repaired; and while the Duke d'Alençon retook Mouzon, the Duke de Vendôme effected an entrance into both Artois and Hanault; repaying with usury upon the enemy the enormities of which they had been guilty on the French territories.

Having made himself master of Bapaume and Landrecies, to the latter of which the imperialists set fire previous to their retreat, M. d'Alençon found his task accomplished; while on the Spanish frontier, Bonnivet, towards the close of September, possessed himself of several fortresses in Biscay; and, ultimately, of Fontarabia.

During these proceedings the emperor had joined his retreating army near Valenciennes, having with him a strong body of troops; and Francis no sooner ascertained that he was present in person than he became

eager to attack him. In furtherance of this design he threw a bridge across the Scheldt, and the Count de Nassau who had advanced to reconnoitre, was only enabled to escape with his followers through the aid of a dense fog, which had rendered his approach invisible. Bourbon, La Palice, and Tremouille, vehemently urged the king to an immediate onslaught, and had their advice been followed, the army of Charles must have been destroyed; but once more the evil star of Francis prevailed, and he suffered himself to be influenced by the counsels of the Maréchal de Châtillon, who urged caution, and thus suffered the favourable moment to escape.

Nor was this his only imprudence; for, still strongly prejudiced by his mother against Bourbon, he conferred the command of the van-guard, a distinction claimed by the duke as Constable of France, upon M. d'Alençon. The effect of this affront upon a man of so fiery a temperament as Bourbon, and who was moreover jealous of his honour, was terrible. For a moment he remained stupified by surprise; and then, recovering his self-possession, he refused to believe that the messenger had not mistaken the meaning of the king. "I am Connétable of France;" he said haughtily; "and by virtue of that dignity I have a right to lead her army to the field. What will be the opinion of the troops when they learn that my privilege has been invaded, and my authority transferred to a general without experience, and a soldier who has yet even a name to win?"

"The whole army resents the insult which is thus offered to you;" said M. de Pomperant, his ancient

governor; "and are convinced to a man that it is not the spontaneous act of the king himself."

"Who then is my enemy?" he asked fiercely.

"One upon whom you cannot revenge yourself—Madame d'Angoulême."

"Ah! is it so?" exclaimed the duke; "But no—the thing is impossible. She has always professed herself my friend; why then should she thus assail my honour? Perhaps she covets the sword of connétable for her minion Bonnivet. It would be well bestowed upon an upstart whose ancestors were honoured when they acted as equerries to mine! Let the king beware, however, how he seconds such a project."

"Duke;" said M. de Pomperant firmly; "no subject has a right to threaten his sovereign."

"I shall not revenge myself by words;" retorted Bourbon gloomily; "let the nerveless husband of Marguerite de France lead the troops of her brother to battle. The future is still before me, and I shall know how to use it."

Meanwhile, Charles V. had been compelled, as we have shewn, to retreat once more to Valenciennes; the hopes of the allied sovereigns had been falsified, and they had gained nothing by the blood spilt and the desolation created by their arms, save a few provinces which they were not destined long to retain.

The flag of France once more waved above her fortresses; and Francis, having conducted his army to Amiens, where he disbanded a great portion of the troops, entered his capital at the head of the remaining force amid a tumult of joyous welcome.

CHAPTER XVI.

[1522.]

LAUTREC RETURNS TO FRANCE—THE TEMPORARY COMMAND OF THE ARMY IN THE MILANESE IS CONFIDED TO LESCUN—ITS INSUBORDINATION—DESPAIR OF THE MILANESE CITIZENS—PROSPER COLONNA STRENGTHENS THE IMPERIALIST ARMY—LAUTREC DEMANDS SUPPLIES—EXHAUSTED STATE OF THE TREASURY—THE ENAMELLED ORNAMENTS—LOUISE DE SAVOIE UNDERTAKES TO RAISE THE SUPPLIES—THE FINANCE-MINISTER—LAUTREC RETURNS TO MILAN—THE SUPPLIES ARE WITHHELD—THE POPE DECLARES WAR AGAINST FRANCE—THE CONFEDERATED ARMY THREATEN PARMA—IMPRUDENCE OF LAUTREC—DISGUST OF HIS TROOPS—THE SWISS DESERT—THE FRENCH RETIRE TO MILAN—ARE ATTACKED BY THE ENEMY, AND DRIVEN OUT—LAUTREC RETREATS TO COMO, IS PURSUED BY PESCARA, AND TAKES UP HIS WINTER QUARTERS AT CREMONA—LESCUN PROCEEDS TO FRANCE WITH DESPATCHES—INDIGNATION OF FRANCIS—ANXIETY OF LEO X.—HIS EXULTATION AT THE CAPTURE OF MILAN—HIS DEATH.

CHAPTER XVI.

[1522.]

Unfortunately for Francis matters wore a less favourable aspect in Lombardy, where Lautrec, who had returned to France in order to negotiate an advantageous and wealthy marriage with the daughter of the Count Albret d'Orval at the instigation of Madame de Châteaubriand, had confided to his brother, M. de Lescun, the temporary command of the army; which, from its having been left unpaid throughout the whole of the preceding year, had been compelled to exist by plunder and rapine, and had, accordingly, created a revolt among the peasantry, who were driven to exasperation, not only by the daily and hourly exactions of the invading troops, but also from the fact that a great portion of the native nobility had emigrated in order to save the remnant of their property, and to escape from the tyrannous persecution of the French general; while Prosper Colonna, the general appointed both by the emperor and the pope, had profited by the discontent in the French ranks, to invite to his standard the formidable Spanish bands who arrived from Naples, and to incorporate them with the German men-at-arms

sent to his assistance by Charles, and the Grisons and Swiss in the pay of the holy see.

Under these circumstances Lautrec had awaited with impatience the return of Francis to his own dominions, in order to impress upon him the utter impracticability of pursuing the war, and defending the Milanese with any chance of success, unless he could carry back with him the sum of four hundred thousand crowns, with which to settle all arrears among his own troops, and to subsist a force of eight thousand Swiss whom his brother had hastily recruited.

Francis, angered as he was by this first and heavy check upon his desire to plunge once more into pleasure and dissipation, was, nevertheless, unable to deny the justice of such a claim; but although the war had only recently commenced, the treasury was as usual already exhausted; the return of the king having been the signal for a succession of courtly festivities, hunting parties, and lavish expenditure of every description. The favour of Madame de Châteaubriand had, moreover, become increased by their temporary separation; and it was the pleasure of Francis, who loved magnificence in every shape, to overwhelm her with the most precious jewels he could obtain, and of which the costliness was enhanced by the marvellous fashion of their setting, which had inspired such emulation among the court jewellers, that every ornament became a work of art, rendered even more gratifying to the vanity of the favourite by the fact that the chasing, enamelled with small gems, was formed on each into some gallant device, or entertwining of the two FF. which preceded

alike the Christian name of the king and her own; and that these were invented at the desire of the enamoured monarch, by the Duchess d'Alençon his sister; who, rejoiced that her husband had not, during the late brief campaign, utterly sunk into an insignificance which would have increased the contempt that she already entertained for him, willingly lent herself to the wishes of her brother by evincing both affection and deference towards his fair and frail favourite.

Tastes of so ruinous a description as these had necessarily diminished the resources of the royal coffer; and, indisposed as he was to forego them, Francis nevertheless found himself equally powerless to refute the arguments of Lautrec, and to supply his necessities.

Madame d'Angoulême, however, who was fertile in expedients, did not hesitate to promise that she would devise means to liberate him from this new difficulty; and he gladly left an affair in her hands which distracted his mind from other and more pleasant pursuits.

Thus authorized to act as she saw fit, the duchess at once summoned M. de Semblançay, the finance-minister, to her presence; and after assuring him in her most insinuating manner that she felt convinced so good and zealous a servant of her son would leave no means untried to save him from the affront of being once more driven from the Milanese, she urged him to consider seriously if he could not suggest a method of averting such a calamity. For a time the old statesman only shook his head despondingly, and recapitulated the numerous sources of expense by which he was already surrounded; but Madame d'Angoulême was not to be so silenced.

"We are not met, my good friend;" she said with a playful smile; "to enumerate our difficulties, but to discover an expedient which may preserve us from a great danger. We must have money; and surely, in so terrible an emergency as this, you cannot wish your sovereign to suppose that such a realm as France is utterly bankrupt! We must have many resources."

"We *had*, Madam."

"Look at the wars which were sustained by former kings, when the nation was less flourishing than in the present day; and yet they were nobly and royally sustained."

"But those kings to whom you allude, Madam, did not resemble Francis I."

"No, Sir;" replied the duchess with well-acted exultation, and wilfully overlooking the real drift of the minister's remark. "The greater the dishonour to France, therefore, should she suffer such a sovereign to be crippled by want of funds."

"The annual outlay of the court is enormous, Madam;" persisted M. de Semblançay, in his turn evading a direct reply; "more, far more in amount than would sustain a war."

"You refuse, then, to serve me, Sir? You, on whose loyalty and attachment I have hitherto relied with such blind confidence."

"By no means, Madam; but I dare not give a pledge which I may find myself unable to redeem. How am I to raise this money?"

"I think that even I could suggest a method;" said the pertinacious duchess, as she laid her small hand

lightly upon the arm of her companion, and looked up into his face with an expression of almost affectionate trustfulness.

"Mâdam;" said the old man, moved by this condescension; "you know that I have already loyally served three sovereigns. Judge, therefore, if I am likely to fail in my duty to a fourth. Be gracious enough to explain your meaning, and trust to my poor efforts if they can avail."

"I do, M. de Semblançay, I do;" replied the duchess energetically; "we cannot at this moment look for further help from our good city of Paris?"

"The citizens already murmur, Madam."

"And yet the king is so indulgent;" said Madame d'Angoulême half reproachfully; "when had the *bourgeoisie* such easy access to the court? But it is ever so; the people love pleasure, but do not care to pay its price. Let us not, however, waste time, which is now precious, upon their idle discontent. We were speaking of our alternative. Well, then, we will ask nothing of Paris; that is agreed. Nay more, we will ask nothing near home. But what say you to the southern provinces, M. de Semblançay? Surely we have a right to look for succour from the south?"

"The measure will be difficult."

"Perhaps so, but not impossible. I have put the card into your hand. You have now only to play out the game."

Although only half convinced, the minister was disarmed; and the duchess obtained his promise to levy four hundred thousand crowns upon the provincial

chests of the south. This point gained, she hastened to inform her son of her success; who, in his turn, confided it to Lautrec, the anxiety of the Maréchal having been greatly increased by a letter from his brother, calling upon him to return with all speed to Milan, and to resume a government which he was himself utterly unable longer to sustain.

The advice of Madame de Châteaubriand, however, determined him against a haste which might tend to frustrate all his plans, for she had no sooner explained to him the extent of the jealousy which her influence had excited in the heart of the duchess-mother, than he became convinced that Louise de Savoie, extreme in all her feelings, would not hesitate to sacrifice, not only the favourite herself, but all who were connected with her, should she secure an opportunity of revenge; and accordingly he respectfully intimated to the king, that, despite the urgency of the letter from Milan, he could not leave the court until the money had been confided to him.

But Madame d'Angoulême, who was anxious to be rid of his importunity for reasons of her own, had resolved otherwise; and she represented to her son at once the impossibility of procuring so large a sum without some delay, and the danger which the obstinate resistance of Lautrec might bring upon his government; offering to pledge both her own word and that of the finance-minister that immediately the money had reached Paris it should be despatched to its destination without loss of time. With this arrangement Lautrec was, therefore, compelled to appear satisfied, supported as it was by the king's command that he should risk no further delay; and

accordingly, having taken a brief leave of the sovereign and his court, he returned to the unfortunate duchy which had suffered so bitterly from his arrogance and cruelty, with the confident expectation of being ere long enabled to silence the murmurings of his army, and to establish his position.

As, however, after his arrival at Milan he received no intelligence of the advent of the funds which were to liberate him from his difficulties, he immediately levied new contributions upon the most wealthy inhabitants of the desolated duchy, and punished those who resisted with the most uncompromising barbarity; the scaffold was his argument, and the confiscation of private property his vengeance. The dungeons had already been peopled by his equally inexorable brother; and one of his first victims was the Signor Cristoforo Pallavicini, whose only crime was the extent of his property, and whom he condemned to lose his head; a sentence which he carried into effect, although the judge before whom his cause was tried, in order if possible to give a semblance of justice to the proceeding, refused to append his signature to so unholy a sacrifice. Pallavicini, the scion of a noble house, was destined to expatiate the sin of possessing an income of twenty-five thousand crowns; and he perished accordingly, in order that the work of war might be carried on, threatened as it was with immediate cessation from the failure of the receipts anticipated by the French marshal.

Day after day passed by, and yet the promised supplies were withheld, but Lautrec had become desperate; he remembered the formidable enemy whom he had left

at court; an enemy, moreover, who could at all hours command the ear, and influence the resolutions of the monarch. He felt that not only his own interests, but those of his whole family were at stake; and he resolved to persevere. He was deficient neither in talent nor decision, but he was occasionally wanting in energy and presence of mind; and while he possessed the tact of enforcing obedience both from his troops and the people whom he governed, he nevertheless occasionally failed to profit by the most brilliant opportunities of signalizing himself; an excess of precaution which irritated those who served under his command. Unpaid and dissatisfied, the Swiss mercenaries whom his brother had recruited deserted by whole companies at a time, and left a void in his ranks which he was unable to supply; while on the contrary, those who had joined the banner of Leo X. remained faithful to his cause, although repeatedly recalled by the Helvetic diet.

The confederated party threatened to besiege Parma, and the situation of the marshal was critical. The pope had, on the 1st of August, declared war against France, and his troops had even marched upon that city; but a quarrel for precedence which arose between Prosper Colonna, and Ferdinand d'Avalos, Marquis of Pescara, (who, as imperial general, claimed to share the command upon equal terms with the generalissimo of the pope,) occasioned so much confusion that Lautrec found himself enabled, during the delay occasioned by this misunderstanding, to adopt such efficient measures for the defence of the threatened fortress as sufficed to check the progress of the enemy; who after having possessed

themselves of a portion of the city at the commencement of September, were compelled to relinquish their capture by the arrival of the maréchal in person, accompanied by several officers of rank, and a reinforcement of troops, which although not sufficiently powerful to encounter their opponents at a disadvantage, still contributed to paralyse their movements. An entire month was then lost by the opposing generals, each anticipating succours which might enable him to overcome his antagonist. These, however, failed equally on either side; and at length, although not without discussion and dissension among the confederate leaders, the siege was raised.

Upon this occasion M. de Lautrec was guilty of one of those acts of hyper-caution to which we have already alluded. His troops, flushed by their advantage, would gladly have pursued it; but the maréchal, alarmed by the partial revolt in the Milanese, and the aversion with which he was personally regarded throughout the country, was unwilling to risk such an attempt as a pursuit of the retiring and disheartened besiegers; and he consequently permitted Prosper Colonna to pass the Po unimpeded, and to secure a position which enabled him to command the help of which he might by an effort have been deprived, and thus to carry war into the heart of Cremona. Nevertheless his first error might not have proved fatal, had he not followed it up by refusing, despite the remonstrances of those about him, to attack the imperialist general who occupied a disadvantageous position at Rebecco, upon the banks of the Aglio, and under the very guns of the Venetian fortress of Pontevico, by which his own demonstration would have been effectively seconded.

This double opportunity wilfully disregarded disgusted his troops, who henceforward lost faith in their leader; and the influence of the Cardinal of Sion operated so powerfully upon the Swiss mercenaries who had hitherto remained faithful to his cause, that they once more deserted in such numbers as to leave barely a force of four thousand in the ranks of France. Those who remained, moreover, murmured loudly, and demanded the recompense which was habitually conceded to them after every engagement; declaring that if they had not been placed in contact with the enemy under circumstances which rendered success inevitable, the fault lay with the maréchal, who had not afforded them an opportunity of conquest, and not with themselves, who were willing and even eager to be led to battle.

Lautrec was destined most bitterly to expiate his fault. The supplies of money were still withheld: he was distrusted by his troops; detested by the citizens; alike feared and execrated by the people: he had lost the *prestige* which his former military renown had cast about him; and even those who shared his command murmured loudly at an enforced inaction which perilled their own honour. He had no longer, however, an alternative; his army was enfeebled by desertion, and his position rendered precarious by private animosity. The sun of his glory had set; and, no longer able to threaten, he found himself compelled to act only on the defensive, and even to retreat within the walls of Milan; a shelter which he had scarcely gained ere he was in his turn assailed by the confederated generals, who made so vigorous a night attack, that, aided by the

citizens, they took possession of the town; and the discomfited maréchal, who was awakened from his sleep by the tumult, had scarcely time to retreat to Como, leaving a portion of his troops to garrison the citadel.

Even there, however, he was not destined to remain in safety, but being pursued by the Marquis de Pescara, was compelled to enter the Venetian territory; where, at the end of a few days, his mortification reached its climax by the information which was conveyed to him, that not only had Como surrendered to the imperialists, but that the city of Cremona was also in their power, although the citadel still held out. Enraged at the overthrow of all his brilliant anticipations, Lautrec no sooner learnt these ill tidings than he made a last and desperate effort, introduced some troops into the town, and by a vigorous attack upon the walls succeeded in wresting it once more from the enemy, and in establishing his winter quarters in the only portion of his late government which now acknowledged his authority, or afforded a safe asylum for his person.

In this emergency the maréchal despatched his brother Lescun to the French court with despatches, which, being of so disastrous an import, could not have arrived at a more unpropitious moment. A second conference had taken place at Calais between the ministers of Charles and Francis, at which Wolsey presided as the representative of his sovereign, with a state and dignity even hyper-monarchical; presents of the most costly description had once more been lavished upon the avaricious cardinal, and no pains spared to conciliate his favour; but the whole of the proceedings had been

carried on with a levity and carelessness which convinced the French statesmen that no good result could be anticipated upon their parts. The terms proposed by Wolsey were such as their dignity did not permit them to accept; and Francis had now gained a perfect conviction of the perfidy and double-dealing of the English monarch and his minister.

He was consequently ill prepared to receive the tidings from Milan with either patience or temper; and he accordingly overwhelmed the unfortunate messenger with the most bitter reproaches; accusing his brother of being deficient both in skill and courage; of having so misconducted his government as to render the name of his sovereign odious to the Milanese; and of ultimately completing by cowardice what he had commenced by cruelty.

Lescun shrank abashed before a storm of accusation which he was not permitted to palliate. He was aware that one of its brightest jewels had been rent from the crown of Francis; and with consummate judgment he bowed before this tempest of royal wrath, and left it to time and to Madame de Châteaubriand to justify both himself and the absent maréchal.

While these disastrous events were taking place in the Milanese, Leo X. was a prey to the most violent anxiety. The reverses of Charles in the Low Countries he had never anticipated; and his apprehension that the arms of Francis, towards whom he had falsified all his pledges, and whose friendship he could never again hope to regain, would prove equally fortunate in Italy, filled him with constant forebodings. His exultation on learning

the capture of Milan and the recovery of Parma and Piacenza was consequently extravagant; and he immediately declared his intention of commanding public thanksgivings to be offered up in every church in Rome, in gratitude for such unhoped-for success. The surprise had, however, affected his health; and having given the necessary directions he retired to his chamber complaining of slight indisposition. In the first instance this illness excited little uneasiness, being attributed by some to excessive emotion, and by others to the effects of cold or malaria; but it was, nevertheless, fated to be his last; and on Sunday the 1st of December he expired so suddenly as to deprive him of the habitual ceremonies of the Church, after the brief suffering of a week. Suspicions of poison well or ill founded were rife in Rome; and it is asserted that not only the appearance of the body after death tended to justify them, but that a *post mortem* examination removed all doubt.

CHAPTER XVII.

[1522.]

DISCONTENT OF THE DUKE DE BOURBON—A SUMMONS TO AMBOISE—A MATURE PASSION—LOUISE DE SAVOIE OFFERS HER HAND TO BOURBON—HE REJECTS IT—A MUTUAL HATRED—MARGUERITE DE VALOIS AND BONNIVET—THE PALACE OF A PARVENU—OSTENTATION OF THE DUKE DE BOURBON—THE LAW-SUIT—ACCESSION OF ADRIAN VI.—FRANCIS RESOLVES TO ATTEMPT THE RECOVERY OF THE MILANESE—HE LEVIES A TAX ON THE STATES OF LANGUEDOC—CHARLES V. VISITS ENGLAND—THE TWO SOVEREIGNS AGREE TO INVADE FRANCE—FRANCIS SENDS REINFORCEMENTS TO THE ARMY OF LAUTREC—THE FRENCH TAKE NOVARRA—BUT ARE REPULSED BEFORE PAVIA—PROSPER COLONNA ESTABLISHES HIMSELF AT BICOCCA—THE SWISS UNDER LAUTREC MUTINY, AND INSIST UPON MEETING THE ENEMY—LAUTREC MARCHES ON BICOCCA—DISORDERLY CHARGE OF THE SWISS MERCENARIES—THEY DESERT—LAUTREC RETREATS TO CREMONA—AND PROCEEDS TO FRANCE—LESCUN ASSUMES THE COMMAND, IS ATTACKED BY COLONNA, AND COMPELLED TO CAPITULATE—THE VENETIAN SENATE DECLINE TO ENTER INTO A TREATY WITH FRANCE—LESCUN EVACUATES LOMBARDY—PESCARA MARCHES AGAINST GENOA—THE CITY IS TAKEN BY TREACHERY—CRUELTY OF THE IMPERIALIST GENERALS—THE FRENCH LOSE ITALY.

CHAPTER XVII.

[1522.]

MEANWHILE the Duke de Bourbon, who had become a widower, and who could not forget the affront to which he had been subjected by the king at Valenciennes, instead of joining the court at Amboise had established himself at his hotel in Paris, where he lived in almost complete seclusion, receiving only a few of his most intimate friends and followers; apparently absorbed by some dark and engrossing thought, and occupied in taking measures to protect himself against the pretensions of Madame d'Angoulême; who, on the pretext of being herself a Bourbon, had instituted a claim to inherit from his late wife the large property which he had received as her dowry.

Unaware of the secret motive by which Louise de Savoie was thus urged to an attempt which would, if successful, reduce him from one of the most wealthy to one of the most needy nobles of the court, Bourbon saw only in the obstinate rigour with which she prosecuted her suit the open demonstration of an implacable enmity; and the iron which before had already entered his heart, corroded there.

Thus it was with more surprise than alacrity that he obeyed her summons to Amboise, although it reached him in an autograph letter couched in the most courteous terms; nor was he less astonished when he found himself welcomed with the same warmth and urbanity.

Madame d'Angoulême, although she had now attained her forty-seventh year, was still a superb woman; and her mirror only reflected the flatteries of the courtiers. Her gallantries were as unrestrained and as numerous as ever; and she did not care to remember that time was passing rapidly over her which she could never redeem. We have already hinted at her passion for the connétable; and that passion, although it had been suffered to slumber for a time, had never been suppressed. The very litigation into which she had entered had been undertaken rather as a means than as a result; and satisfied that she had now awakened the fears of the duke, she simply sought to complete her work by awakening alike his ambition and his softer feelings. Nothing had been omitted to strengthen the spell: her attire, on his reception, was both graceful and gorgeous; her manner at once dignified and gentle; her arguments at the same time reproachful and reluctant: but still Bourbon stood his ground, and maintained his rights.

"You are obdurate, duke;" she said at length, with a smile which was half smothered in a sigh; "You do not, or you will not, understand me. At a former period, and under the same circumstances, this very question which we are now discussing was argued between yourself and Madame Anne de France; and finally arranged in a manner which we should perhaps, in our turn, do well to imitate."

"Would that it were possible, Madam;" replied Bourbon gloomily; "but M. d'Alençon has been fated to thwart me in my path through life. He has lately robbed me of my honour—and—he married Madame Marguerite."

"True;" said the duchess biting her lip; "the king's sister is beyond your reach—but the king's mother, M. de Bourbon, is a widow."

"Do I understand you rightly, Madam?" asked the duke as a cloud gathered upon his brow; "Do not jest with me. Recent events have rendered me a poor courtier."

"I am sincere, Connétable;" said Louise de Savoie energetically; "I am ready to make our separate interests one and indivisible."

"I thank you, Madam;" was the cold rejoinder; "you have conferred upon me an honour which I could not anticipate, and by which I regret that I cannot profit. I shall never contract a second marriage; and if this be the alternative of your forbearance I must brave the worst. If our law-suit is to proceed, so be it; I am prepared to uphold my claim."

"As you will, Monsieur de Bourbon;" said the duchess rising haughtily from her seat; "our interview is at an end, and henceforth we are strangers to each other."

The connétable attempted no rejoinder; but with a ceremonious salutation he quitted the apartment, and left the haughty Louise de Savoie to her reflections.

It was the first occasion upon which, during a long career of vice, she had been made to feel that she was

scorned, and for a time she was half suffocated by conflicting emotions. In so far as her corrupted heart was capable of such a feeling she had loved Bourbon; she, the mother of a king, with one foot upon the steps of the throne,—she had loved a subject, and had been repulsed! But Louise de Savoie could hate as vehemently as she had loved.

Nor was Bourbon less decided in his aversion to Madame d'Angoulême than he had by this interview rendered her towards himself. It was to her interference that he attributed the marriage of her daughter to the Duke d'Alençon, at a period when he could no longer entertain a doubt that had the princess been permitted to follow her own inclination, she would have become his wife; and, subsequently, his disgust was deepened by her undisguised protection of Bonnivet, whose passion for Marguerite was well known; and a disgust which was heightened by the fact that the Admiral was accused during a visit made by the court to his château in Poitou, of having adopted such measures to possess himself, if not of the affections, at least of the person of the princess, as must have cost him his head, favourite as he was, had not the principal attendant of Madame d'Alençon ventured to remind her imprudent mistress, (who in the first burst of her indignation was about to communicate the whole transaction to the king,) that affairs of so delicate a nature would not bear handling; and that there were evil tongues about the court which would not hesitate to imply that M. de Bonnivet must have received more than ordinary encouragement before he could have dared so much.

Nevertheless, the trustworthiness of the same lady may well be suspected, as a whispered version of the disgraceful tale soon spread among the courtiers; and at length reached the ears of the connétable, whose indignation was unbounded; and who, with the natural haughtiness which was inherent in him, considered himself doubly aggrieved that such an outrage should remain unpunished, when the aggressor was a vassal of his own, who did homage to him for his estates, and moreover a man of comparatively humble birth. So great indeed was his contempt for the sudden rise of Bonnivet, whom he saw daily increasing in arrogance, and affecting a magnificence with which he could not himself compete, that as he was pacing the marble hall of the favourite beside the king, who was warmly expatiating upon the taste and splendour of the whole edifice, he continued resolutely silent, until Francis, struck by the circumstance, turned towards him suddenly with the exclamation: "You amaze me, M. le Connétable! You who delight in all that is rich and great—you have not bestowed even one word of praise upon this splendid pile. And yet, you cannot deny that it is a noble residence. Be candid; what think you of it?"

"That the cage is too large for the bird;" was the dogged reply, as the duke paused in front of a window overlooking his own château of Châtellerault, which appeared like a mere villa from the spot on which he stood.

The king made no comment upon the abruptness of his companion, nor did he affect to comprehend the movement by which it was accompanied; although he was probably reminded at that instant, of the feeling

which he had himself experienced, when in the year 1517, he had stood sponsor to the infant son of the duke, who received him and his court at Moulins with a magnificence that was almost regal. On that occasion both the ceremony and the banquet by which it was succeeded, were gorgeous in the extreme; and several days were consumed in tournays, masquerades, balls, and other pastimes; during the whole of which time the guests were waited on by five hundred gentlemen of good family, attired in rich suits of velvet, and each wearing about his neck a triple chain of gold; a decoration, which at that period was not only esteemed as one of excessive magnificence, but also implied the rank of the entertainer.

Although he saw fit to display so much splendour at the christening of his son, M. de Bourbon had, from the hour of his birth, felt convinced that the infant would not survive; his mother, Suzanne de Bourbon, being not only infirm in health, but also slightly deformed in person; and his foreboding proved correct; for not only did the child die within a few months, but was followed by the mother at the commencement of the following year.

We have already stated, early in the work, that it was to avoid a weary and uncertain law-suit that the connétable had been induced to accept the hand of his cousin, while his heart was wholly given to the princess Marguerite; and, accordingly, he had by his marriage with Suzanne, united all the possessions of the several branches of the Bourbon family, which rendered him at once the most wealthy and the most powerful noble in France. The death of his wife was succeeded in the following

year by that of her mother, Madame Anne de France; and thus the duke found himself, as he believed, the sole legitimate claimant to enormous possessions; and became anxious for an heir to his proud name and ample fortunes. The Duchess d'Alençon was lost to him; and after some lingering regrets, he had so far overcome his repugnance to a second marriage with another, as to ask of Francis the hand of the Princess Rénée, the sister of Queen Claude.

The king, however, who saw in this proposal only a new proof of the soaring ambition of his already too powerful subject, and Madame d'Angoulême, for still more personal reasons, were alike regardless both of the claims of Bourbon, and of the entreaties of the princess, who, endowed with remarkable intellect and a sound judgment, was well able to appreciate the noble qualities of her suitor.

The interference of the duchess-mother was not, as we have seen, favourable to her own interests; but only served to add another to the long list of injuries which the duke attributed to her influence; and thus, when she so far forgot the dignity of her station and the modesty of her sex, as to offer to him her own hand, he revenged himself not only by rejecting the proposal, but by detailing the whole scene to his chosen friends, accompanying his recital by terms so offensive to the character of the duchess as to exasperate Francis; who, it is even said, upon one occasion, raised his hand to strike him.

Under these circumstances Louise de Savoie vowed his ruin; and unfortunately her authority over the chancellor had long been so unbounded, that she urged

forward the threatened law-suit with an acrimony and perseverance which betrayed her perfect confidence in its result.

While this important cause was pending, the college of cardinals was engrossed by the necessity of electing a new pope; and meanwhile the confederated sovereigns, who had lost in Leo X. a powerful and sure ally, suspended their proceedings, uncertain as to what might be the views and principles of his successor. Among the numerous competitors for the vacant dignity it was, however, universally believed that the choice of the conclave would fall either on the Cardinal de' Medici, the nephew of the deceased pontiff, or Wolsey, the English minister. The one relied upon the efforts made by Leo X. to secure his election, and the other upon the often repeated pledges of the emperor. Both were, nevertheless, fated to disappointment; and great was the astonishment, not only of the two candidates themselves, when, despite all the intrigues of their several parties, they found themselves unsuccessful, but also that of all Christendom, when it was ascertained that a man whose very name had hitherto been almost unheard in Rome, and who had apparently made no effort to attain the triple crown, was called to the chair of St. Peter. The influence of the Medici, and the crooked policy of Wolsey, who had not scrupled to sacrifice the honour of his monarch and the interests of his country to his own wild dream of ambition, had succumbed beneath the superior craft of the wily Charles; and on the 9th of January 1522, Adrian, Cardinal of Tortosa, the former preceptor of the emperor, and his

present governor in Spain, was elected by an overwhelming majority.

Francis did not for a moment deceive himself as to the probable results of this new triumph on the part of his enemy; for not only had Charles, by influencing the conclave to elect one of his own devoted servants to the papal see, given him an immediate and powerful interest in Italy, but it had also convinced all who were attached to his cause that he was both able and willing to promote their fortunes. This new mortification rankled deeply with the French king; and it served to arouse him for a time from his trance of pleasure, and to decide him to make another and a strenuous effort to reinstate himself in the Milanese. The power of Charles had become formidable to all Europe. The whole of Germany acknowledged him as its emperor; every European sovereign was either his ally or his dependent; his sway was now colossal; and Francis saw himself called upon to contend single-handed against a hydra-headed enemy. Of the growing hostility of England moreover he had long ceased to entertain a doubt, and he accordingly anticipated from day to day a declaration of war, which had been hitherto delayed rather from policy than from inclination.

Nor were his home prospects more cheering. His frontiers were for the most part unfortified, and his treasury empty; his subjects already overwhelmed with taxation, and the citizens of Paris full of discontent. Even the very courtiers about him, although they were not insensible to pleasure, were still greedy of glory; and many a noble brow darkened as the shadow of coming events loomed over their country. In this

emergency, his first measures were to levy a tax of twenty-five thousand livres on the states of Languedoc, for the purpose of repairing the fortifications of Narbonne and the fortresses of the eastern Pyrenees; to renew the sale of judicial offices; and finally, to institute perpetual rents on the Hotel-de-Ville. These arrangements were not made, however, without considerable opposition. Strong in his sense of the royal prerogative, Francis disdained to explain to his subjects in the more distant provinces the fearful emergency in which he was involved; and thus, what through personal alarm or national pride might have been conceded to him without serious difficulty, was withheld from a resolution to resist the mere dictates of an arbitrary will.

While the French king was engaged in these financial operations, the emperor paid a second visit to England, and remained the guest of Henry VIII. during six weeks; where he employed his time so successfully as to induce his royal host to ratify in person the betrothal secretly concluded at Bruges by the cardinal-legate between himself and the Princess Mary, who was to receive a dowry of four hundred thousand crowns; and to obtain his pledge that he would enter France simultaneously with himself before the end of May 1524, accompanied by an army of forty thousand infantry, and ten thousand horse; each declaring the several provinces over which he affected to have a claim, and receiving the promise of the other that he should be permitted to retain them in the event of their subjugation.

The treasury of France was no sooner replenished

than Francis lost no time in providing for the restoration of the Milanese; and despatched for that purpose a supply of money to the Maréchal de Lautrec by the Bastard of Savoie, M. de Chabannes, and the Count de Montmorenci, to whom he moreover gave authority to levy a force of sixteen thousand Swiss. The effect of this reinforcement was electrical; the flagging spirit of the French troops revived; and Lautrec, eager to revenge his late defeat, displayed an energy which, had it been more seasonably developed, might have saved the duchy. Several of the minor towns were retaken; and, flushed with hope, the maréchal pushed forward to Milan, where he was gallantly opposed by the garrison, but nevertheless commenced an attack upon the city, to whose capture however, the hatred with which he had inspired the inhabitants proved an equally formidable obstacle.

Weary of his iron rule, they defended themselves with an energy that baffled all his efforts; and at length, convinced that his attempt to reduce Milan was hopeless, he was reluctantly compelled to abandon it, and to march upon Novarra, which having yielded, enabled him to form a junction with some troops which his brother had brought to his assistance, and among whom were Pietro da Navarro—who had for a time abandoned the cause of France, but whose sword was once more unsheathed in her defence—and the redoubtable Bayard. He then made an attack upon Pavia; but Prosper Colonna had not only succeeded in reaching that city before him, but had also enabled Francisco Sforza to join him with his troops; an event which prevented its capture.

Having relieved Pavia, Colonna took up his quarters at Bicocca, a castle seated in an extensive park, and surrounded by deep ditches, about a league from Milan, where he hastily threw up outworks, and rendered the place so strong as to deter Lautrec from any attempt to dislodge him. The situation of the Maréchal was embarrassing; for not only did Colonna hold him at bay in this stronghold, but Anchiso Visconti with a body of Milanese troops blockaded Arona, where a portion of the money which had arrived for the pay of the army was thus rendered unattainable. The French cavalry were already eighteen months in arrear, but they nevertheless bore their privations with patience, although they were both badly equipped and still worse armed; while the Venetians, who in accordance with the recent treaty had joined the French forces for the defence of the Milanese, were supine and cowardly, and resolutely refused either to advance far from their own frontiers, or to risk their safety in any engagement by which they could not individually profit. Finally the Swiss, wearied by a war which afforded them no opportunity of pillage, and of a general who preferred strategy to action, murmured loudly when they found that the attack upon Bicocca was relinquished; and had no sooner ascertained that the long-expected supplies had reached Arona, than they collected tumultuously about the tent of the maréchal, declaring that he should immediately satisfy their demands or give battle to Colonna.

In vain did the French general explain to them the impossibility of procuring the money during the blockade of the town where it was deposited, and the impregnable

nature of the papal general's position; they were deaf to his reasonings, and persisted that they would be paid, brought hand to hand with the enemy, or disband themselves.

The alternative was difficult, as the departure of the mercenaries would have been equivalent to a defeat, and Lautrec was painfully convinced that it would be immediately followed by that of the Venetians, already weary of the service in which they were engaged. In this emergency he consulted the feelings of his troops, who were all eager for action, and although against his own judgment and that of M. de Savoie and the Marquis de la Palice, he ultimately left Monza on the 29th of April, (1523,) at daybreak, having committed the charge of the vanguard to Montmorenci, that of the rear to the Duke d'Urbino, and reserved to himself the command of the main body. He had consented that the Swiss should, as they had demanded, attack the enemy in front, while his brother, the Maréchal de Foix, should march to the left upon the bridge, and effect an entrance into the enclosure; a third division, whom he caused to substitute the red cross for the national one of white, in the hope that they might be mistaken by Colonna for a body of his own troops, were ordered to the right; while the Black Bands and the Venetians were to support the Swiss and to act as a reserve.

In order to secure the success of this combined attack, however, it was necessary that the three divisions should arrive on the ground simultaneously; and that the Swiss who were in advance should move slowly, in order to give time to the other bodies to come up with them;

a circumstance which was strenuously explained by the anxious general, who was aware that the fortunes of the day hinged mainly upon this manœuvre. His eloquence, however, availed nothing; arrogant and headstrong, the mercenaries affected to despise the enemy against whom they were about to contend, and complained that too much time had already been lost in futile calculations; and accordingly, Montmorenci had no sooner halted in a defile under cover of the entrenchments, for the purpose of awaiting the arrival of the artillery, than they openly opposed his authority; and asserting that they did not require the assistance of the French guns, rushed tumultuously forward, exposing themselves to the fire of the enemy which swept them off in files as they advanced, without themselves losing a single man, protected as they were by entrenchments so loftily constructed that the Swiss could scarcely attain the summit with their pikes.

It was a butchery rather than a conflict. Three thousand of them fell before they would retreat, and among others their celebrated leader Albert de la Pierre; while Montmorenci was so desperately wounded that he was carried from the field. At the precise moment when they at length gave way, Lautrec had reached the right wing of Colonna's army; but the papal general fearing some stratagem on the part of his adversary, had negatived the *ruse* of the Maréchal by causing his men to add a green bough to the red cross on their uniform, and the imperialist troops consequently fell upon the French whom they at once recognised, without fear of mistake. As the engagement commenced M. de Lescun passed the

bridge, but it was already too late. Colonna, relieved from the attack of the Swiss, who were totally routed, had full leisure to turn his whole strength against the two marshals, and to compel their retreat.

The position attained by the Maréchal de Foix, who had succeeded in forcing an entrance to the enemy's entrenchments, had inspired him for a time with the hope that he might be enabled to hold his ground, and to redeem the imprudence of the van-guard; but unfortunately for the French cause, he had also under his command a number of Swiss troops, who instead of supporting the gallant charge made by his cavalry, resolutely refused to act; and thus his whole brigade was cut to pieces, while he himself had a narrow escape, his horse having been killed under him, and a second with difficulty secured to carry him from the field. This circumstance at once became evident to Colonna, who attempted to profit by it on the instant, and for that purpose ordered a sally to be made, by which the supine mercenaries might be taken in flank; but the manœuvre, rapidly as it was executed, was rendered abortive by M. de Pontdormy,[1] who, suspecting the object of their movement, attacked the advancing party with his cavalry so resolutely, that before they could accomplish their retreat the greater portion of them were destroyed.

[1] Antoine de Crequi was the son of Jean de Crequi, the sixth of the name, Seigneur de Crequi and Canaples. The original name of the family was Pont-de-Remy, which had ultimately been corrupted into Pontdormy. M. de Pontdormy was a brave general, and highly esteemed, not only by his sovereign, but by all the army, who placed the greatest faith in his intrepidity and judgment.

Baffled, but not beaten, the French forces were still formidable; and Lautrec, whose energy continued unabated, determined to renew the attack on the following day; but aware of the great importance of retaining the Swiss troops, he exerted all his eloquence to induce them to remain within sight of Bicocca, and even pledged himself that his own men should sustain the brunt of the battle, if they would promise to support them.

Conscious, however, that they had by their own imprudence trammelled his proceedings, they maintained a sullen silence; refused to communicate their intentions; and assumed the position of persons who considered themselves aggrieved. Had they possessed sufficient temper to be influenced by the arguments of the maréchal, and remained true to their engagements, all might still have been retrieved, and their own sullied glory restored; but the representations of the Cardinal of Sion, who from the opposite camp had never ceased his efforts to estrange them from the cause of France, combined with their mortification, rendered them invulnerable to persuasion; and on the morrow they not only commenced their retreat, but even effected it in so tumultuous and disorderly a manner, that Lautrec saw himself compelled to detach the whole of his cavalry to cover their rear in order to preserve them from total annihilation; and thus sheltered, they made their way to Bergama, and thence returned to their mountains.

Nor was this the only serious defalcation with which the French general had to contend; for his prescience as regarded the Venetians had not deceived him. Their inertness and disaffection became so evident after the

departure of the mercenaries that he found himself reduced to the necessity of sending M. de Montmorenci at once to Venice, in order to effect a better understanding with the only Italian state which still remained friendly to France, and to abandon all further idea of attacking Colonna in his stronghold. Once more, therefore, he strengthened the few fortresses which still maintained their allegiance to Francis; and leaving the command of his exhausted and harassed army to his brother, the Maréchal de Foix, he started for Paris, to explain in person to the king the causes which had conduced to his defeat, and to secure more efficient aid both in money and troops.

Lautrec had not only lost a great number of men, but many of his bravest officers had fallen; while his whole remaining force was dispirited, and ill able to contend against the formidable enemy to which it was opposed. Colonna profited by his knowledge of these circumstances, and abandoning his position at Bicocca, he at once marched upon Cremona, which he invested, aware that the Maréchal de Foix had retired there with the remnant of his army, accompanied by Giovanni de' Medici at the head of about sixteen hundred Italians, to whom one of the gates of the city was confided. This reinforcement had inspired the French general with new courage, and he made immediate preparations for defence, trusting still to redeem the disasters of the late engagement; but once more he was destined to prove the danger and inconvenience attendant upon the command of an army without either political or national sympathies. Could he have secured in lieu of this Florentine force an equal

number of his own countrymen, there is no doubt that he might have held the important place which he then occupied; but, with true Italian guile, de' Medici no sooner saw Colonna before the walls than he made an application for the immediate payment of the arrears due to his followers, and even threatened to open the gate of which he had possession, to the imperialist general, if his claim were not cancelled upon the instant. Impoverished as he was, it was with extreme difficulty that M. de Lescun raised the sum demanded, and silenced the clamours of his *soi-disant* allies, with the help of his principal officers; but the ill-timed pertinacity of the Florentine at once convinced him that he must place no reliance upon the sincerity of his assistance; and under this impression he saw no other alternative than that of a capitulation with the enemy, by which he bound himself to deliver up the city at the expiration of three months unless troops should in the interval arrive from France to reinforce him. Colonna accepted the offered terms, which, by relieving him from the necessity of employing his troops before Cremona, afforded him an opportunity of besieging Genoa.

The Venetian senate, moreover, no sooner ascertained this proof of weakness on the part of the French general, than, although upon the point of acceding to the treaty proposed by Montmorenci, they wavered, hesitated, and finally declined to sign it, under the conviction that no army could reach Italy in time to release the French marshal from his engagements; and thus, reduced to rely upon their own attenuated strength, and unable to make head against an overpowering enemy, the army of

Francis successively lost Lodi and Pizzighettona, the first by siege, and the latter by a capitulation; and finally, Lescun saw himself, on the 21st of May, reduced to sign an agreement, by which he was bound to evacuate the whole of Lombardy save the three fortresses of Cremona, Novara, and Milan, if he did not receive succour within forty days; Andreo Gritti, the general of the Venetians, having meanwhile retired with all his troops to the frontier of his own country, and making no effort beyond that of defending the post of which he had possessed himself.

The whole of Italy was once more lost to France with the exception of the solitary province of Genoa, which had not been included in the capitulation of the Maréchal de Foix; and even that was soon to follow, the Marquis de Pescara having marched against it at the head of all the Spanish foot, and a division of the Italian army, whose natural rapacity was heightened by his promise that the capture of the city would enable him to satisfy all their demands, and to enrich them with the spoils of the enemy against whom they were leagued. An immediate capture of the place was, however, prevented by the arrival of Pietro da Navarro with a couple of galleys and two hundred French infantry, although his influence was insufficient to prevent a parley between Pescara and the Genoese burgesses, who sent a deputation to the Spanish general to endeavour to effect favourable terms for themselves. During this conference it was clearly understood on both sides that all hostilities were to be suspended; and the French soldiers gladly took advantage of the interval to relax for a time in that rigour of disci-

pline which they had hitherto maintained. Fearless of treachery, the guard of the city was diminished, and many of the sentinels were withdrawn from their posts; a fearful and mistaken trust, which was fatally expiated; for some of Pescara's skirmishers having detected a breach in the walls, communicated the discovery which they had been heedlessly permitted to make, and profiting by this circumstance, effected an entrance into the city, whither they were immediately followed by a considerable force, and encountered only by Pietro da Navarro and his little band of followers, who were at once overpowered; when despite the assistance rendered by the citizens who treacherously welcomed the besiegers, Genoa the superb was pillaged with a cold-blooded ferocity disgraceful to its captors.

This event sealed the ruin of the French cause. The stipulated period for the release of Cremona had expired; and although reinforcements were sent from France headed by the Duke de Longueville, they only arrived in time to learn that no further hope existed of any successful attempt, and consequently returned to Picardy, where their services might still prove available, accompanied by the cavalry of the unfortunate Lescun.

CHAPTER XVIII.

[1522.]

LOUISE DE SAVOIE URGES ON HER LAW-SUIT AGAINST BOURBON—THE PARLIAMENT REFUSES TO RATIFY THE DECISION OF THE JUDGES—THE ESTATES OF BOURBON ARE PLACED UNDER SEQUESTRATION—UNGUARDED VIOLENCE OF THE DUKE—THE EMPEROR DESPATCHES M. DE BEAURAIN TO BOURBON—THE PRICE OF REBELLION—BOURBON NEGOTIATES WITH WOLSEY—A DOUBLE TREASON—IMPROVIDENCE OF FRANCIS—EXCESSES OF THE FRENCH SOLDIERY—THE PLAGUE IN PARIS—MOB RIOTS—INEFFECTIVE PRECAUTIONS—DISCONTENT OF ADRIAN VI.—HE ENDEAVOURS TO ALIENATE THE VENETIAN STATES FROM FRANCE—THE VENETIANS ENTER INTO THE EUROPEAN LEAGUE—LAUTREC ARRIVES AT COURT—IRRITATION OF FRANCIS—THE MARÉCHAL IS REFUSED AN AUDIENCE—WANING INFLUENCE OF MADAME DE CHÂTEAUBRIAND—BOURBON ESPOUSES THE CAUSE OF LAUTREC—A STORMY INTERVIEW—LAUTREC PLEADS HIS CAUSE BOLDLY—THE FINANCE-MINISTER AND THE REGENT—LOUISE DE SAVOIE ACCUSED OF APPROPRIATING THE PUBLIC MONIES—TRUTH AND TREACHERY—RECONCILIATION OF THE KING AND LAUTREC—THE TWO FACTIONS—QUEEN CLAUDE URGES THE MARRIAGE OF THE PRINCESS RÉNÉE AND BOURBON—THE PRINCESS IS DISSUADED BY THE REGENT—THE FRENCH SUCCOUR FONTARABIA—DEATH OF THE MARQUIS DE CHÂTILLON—CHARLES V. LANDS AT DOVER AND MEETS HENRY VIII.—UNJUST DEMANDS OF THE ENGLISH KING—DIGNIFIED REPLY OF FRANCIS—ARROGANT DECLARATION OF BONNIVET—CHARLES CONFERS THE PROTECTORATE OF THE LOW COUNTRIES UPON HENRY VIII.—WAR DECLARED AGAINST FRANCE BY ENGLAND—THE EARL OF SURREY AND THE COUNT DE BUREN ATTACK THE FRENCH FRONTIERS—THE DUKE DE VENDÔME PROCEEDS TO THE SEAT OF WAR—FRANCIS COINS THE SILVER SCREEN OF ST. MARTIN'S TOMB TO PAY HIS TROOPS—IMPRUDENT FUTILITY OF FRANCIS—THE EARL OF SURREY RETURNS TO ENGLAND—FRANCIS DESPATCHES AN ARMY TO INVEST MILAN—FRANCIS IS APPRISED OF THE INTENDED REBELLION OF BOURBON—THE QUEEN'S DINNER—BOURBON LEAVES THE COURT—THE COUNT DE ST. VALLIER—PERTINACITY OF BOURBON—HE RETIRES TO MOULINS.

CHAPTER XVIII.

[1522.]

DESPITE these reverses, involving as they did the honour of the French crown, and in themselves so disastrous as to have claimed the whole attention of Louise de Savoie, she had continued, with the assistance of Duprat, to pursue her suit against the Duke de Bourbon with an acrimony which betrayed the whole extent of the hatred that she bore him. The possessions which had formed the dowry of his wife, and had been secured to her by the assent of her mother Madame Anne de France, proceeded, as we have elsewhere stated, from a twofold source. A portion of them descended in the Bourbon family by inheritance; and Madame d'Angoulême, who was the niece of the two last dukes of the elder branch, became their legitimate heiress in the event of her being enabled to set aside the donation made by the duchess Suzanne to her husband; while the remainder were appanages which the crown was competent to reclaim at pleasure, and to reincorporate in the royal domains.

It was upon the hereditary inheritance that Louise de Savoie founded her pretensions, assuming that Madame

Suzanne de Bourbon had acted illegally in disposing of the family property during her own lifetime and without her sanction; while the advocate-general, anxious still further to second her views, to which he was no stranger, demanded that all the titles by which M. de Bourbon held his estates should be communicated to him in order that he might be enabled to form his opinion upon the legitimacy of his several claims; declaring at the same time that he was strongly inclined to believe that the whole inheritance belonged by right of law to the monarch.

This judgment he speedily followed up by asserting that no valid claim could be advanced to such portions of the domains of the duke as had been secured to the family of Bourbon during the reigns of Charles VII. and Louis XI, such concessions having been sanctioned rather by favour than by justice; while those which had been granted by Louis XII. were still more questionable from the fact of their having encroached upon the rights of the crown. Thus, and upon these arguments, he reclaimed the county of La Marche, and the confiscated lordships of the Duke de Nemours, settled upon his daughter by Louis XI; and he had no sooner procured a decree of the parliament declaring the donation of non-avail, and restoring these possessions to the king, than he proceeded upon other grounds to attack the right of M. de Bourbon to the duchies of Auvergne and Bourbonnais, and the county of Clermont. Here, however, the parliament refused to ratify his decision; alleging that in all transfers of territory made among different members of the reigning family, the law had always been subordinate to the will of the monarch, and that the

precedent of setting aside the acts of the four preceding sovereigns would have a tendency so dangerous, that they could not immediately decide a point of such importance. Enough had, however, been done to convince M. de Bourbon that the Duchess d'Angoulême was determined to effect his ruin; a conviction in which he was strengthened by the fact, that all his public revenues were stopped upon the pretence of necessities of state; while the duchies and counties which were still objects of litigation, were placed under sequestration until the final sentence should be pronounced.

The indignation of the connétable accordingly exceeded all bounds; nor did he make an effort to conceal the nature of his feelings, either towards Louise de Savoie herself, or against the king, who was weak enough to submit to the arbitrary will of a woman without dignity or character. This unguarded vehemence of language was quickly conveyed to the ears of Madame d'Angoulême, who revenged herself by urging on the reluctant parliament to a decision; and by overlooking, either wilfully or blindly, the possible consequences of an animosity which she had carried to persecution.

So important a struggle became, as a natural consequence, known and canvassed at every European court; and the emperor no sooner ascertained the pitch of reckless exasperation at which Bourbon had arrived, than he despatched to France the Count de Beaurain, his lieutenant-general in the Low Countries, and a cousin of M. de Chièvres, his late minister, who arrived in the spring of 1523 at Moulins, where the duke was then residing, and exhibiting an ostentatious display of magni-

ficence better calculated to deepen the dislike of Francis and his mother than to propitiate their favour. The imperial envoy found him in precisely the temper which Charles had anticipated. He had become careless to the interests of France; regardless of her claims upon him as a citizen; disgusted alike with her laws, her policy, and her honours; chafed at the insult which had been put upon him at the head of his troops, and irritated by the injustice which was stripping him of his civil privileges. Adrien de Croï, Sire de Beaurain, was no stranger to Bourbon, having been his prisoner two years previously at Hesdin, where, during the brief captivity of the former, a mutual regard had been engendered; and thus the duke did not scruple to lay before him the extent of his grievances, or to admit that he should not hesitate to adopt any measure by which he might revenge himself upon his persecutors.

This opportunity now presented itself; and with all the bitterness of desperation, Bourbon listened to the terms proposed by the emperor, who offered, in the event of his abandoning the cause of Francis for his own, to assist him in the recovery of the estates which had been wrested from him, and, moreover, to give him the hand of his sister Eleañora, the widowed Queen of Portugal, with the province of Beaujolois as her dower. These proposals were however insufficient to satisfy the vengeance of the connétable; who declared that, in return for his allegiance to Charles, he demanded, not only what the emperor had shown himself ready to concede, but also that Henry VIII. should be admitted to a league whereby France should be dismembered, Languedoc, Burgundy, Champagne,

and Picardy, be relinquished to Charles himself; Provence and Dauphiny annexed to his own appanage of the Bourbonnais and Auvergne, and erected into a kingdom; and the remainder of France delivered over to Henry.

The terms of the duke, monstrous as they were, were accepted by M. de Beaurain without hesitation; and it was then concluded that Bourbon, in order to facilitate the success of the project, should endeavour to take possession of the king's person, on his passage through some of the provinces; or, in the event of his failing to accomplish this object, should, so soon as Francis had crossed the Alps to rejoin the army in Italy, raise a force of a thousand nobles with their followers, and six thousand infantry, and uniting his troops with twelve thousand lansquenets whom the emperor would march through Franche-Comté, impede the French king on his return.

From Moulins M. de Beaurain at once proceeded to England to negotiate for his imperial master; and he was immediately followed by the Seigneur de Châteaufort, the chamberlain of the connétable, charged with a letter from the duke to Wolsey, and authorized to proffer upon his part such terms to Henry as were calculated to remove every objection which he might otherwise have felt to embark in so extreme and treacherous an undertaking. The result was such as Bourbon had anticipated. The English monarch, dazzled by the prospect of a second throne, by an act dated May the 17th, 1523, gave full powers to two of his counsellors to treat with the connétable, under the title of "Most Serene Prince;" and also authorized his ambassadors in Spain to negotiate with him, upon his swearing homage and fealty to him-

self as King of France; and a short time subsequently he despatched a disguised envoy to Bourg-en-Bresse, (where the connétable was residing for a time, in order to be in the more immediate neighbourhood of his new allies,) to receive his pledge that he would fulfil the conditions of the compact which he had made, without reservation. This pledge was instantly given by the duke, and preparations were made without further delay by Henry and his minister for the advance of an English army upon Normandy.

While these secret negotiations were thus progressing, Francis, notwithstanding his recent reverses in Italy, the menacing position of the enemy, the helplessness of his frontiers, and the impoverished state of his army which was still suffering from need of the long-withheld supplies, was wasting alike both time and money in the most reckless extravagance. The expenses of his court amounted to the enormous sum of a hundred and fifty thousand livres monthly. Balls, banquets, tilting matches, and hunting parties, absorbed all his attention; and meanwhile, the kingdom was thrown into a state of fearful disorder by the troops, who, having no other means of sustaining life, were existing upon the pillage of the inhabitants; at first confining their outrages to the scattered villages, and contenting themselves with rapine; but ultimately even entering the towns, and committing enormities of every description. Nor was the capital exempt from its own horrors, the plague having declared itself in a form so fearful that hundreds fell victims to its ravages; and continued, month after month, with a virulence which palsied the energies of the faculty.

Street tumults were of continual occurrence; and, as upon all similar occasions, the people murmured loudly, attributing their sufferings to human agency; while assassinations became so frequent, that, in order to appease the popular fury, Francis found himself compelled, early in the spring, to take up his abode in the palace of the Tournelles, and endeavour to calm the excited spirit of the mob by showing himself among them. The effort was, however, unavailing; and as he soon wearied of a position as useless as it was dangerous, he threatened to withdraw to Amboise, when the senechal of the palace caused two gibbets to be erected at the entrance, in order to inspire more respect for the king's person; but even this extreme demonstration failed in its effect, for they were removed during the night by a body of men armed to the teeth; and Francis, indignant at the insult which had been offered to him in his own capital, after having held a bed of justice on the 30th of June, and declared his firm determination to punish the authors of these outrages, left the capital; and, as we have already stated, was soon immersed once more in pleasure and dissipation.

By a fortunate combination of circumstances, the only frontiers on the north of France which it was necessary to defend at this juncture were those of Champagne and Picardy; but even near these, exposed as they were to the double attack of the English and the Flemish, Francis neglected to assemble an army; contenting himself by ordering the Duke de Vendôme, who was governor of the latter province, to distribute his forces between the several fortresses, and instructing M. de la Tremouille, who

had charge of the former with five hundred lances, to raise ten thousand infantry, which he effected; but as he obtained them from the plough, and other agricultural pursuits, they were ill-fitted to encounter and contend successfully with well-disciplined and experienced troops.

Adrian VI. had laboured, from the moment at which he ascended the papal throne, to re-establish the peace of Europe, and had even avoided an interview with the emperor; but he had nevertheless felt aggrieved that the French king should persevere in his pretensions, and consequently make a chilling reply to his advances. His natural prejudices were in favour of Charles; and although he had succeeded in reconciling the Dukes of Urbino and Ferrara with the Holy See, he had nevertheless detached them from the interests of France; and the French troops had no sooner evacuated Italy than he addressed to the Venetian senate a letter in which he urged them to renounce an alliance which could only tend to involve the papal dominions in renewed bloodshed, by encouraging the French in a fresh attempt to effect the conquest of Lombardy.

The appeal was not without its effect; Venice, separated as she was from France, and menaced by all Europe, was in no position to maintain so unequal and precarious a warfare; but, still the senate were anxious to gain time. They were aware that they had already lost much, and gained nothing by their French alliance; while Francis had recently despatched envoys to inform them that in the spring of 1523 he should enter Lombardy with a powerful army; and they were fearful of committing themselves. Their indecision was, how-

ever, terminated by a letter from their ambassador at Paris, who assured them that the French king was no longer an enemy to be feared, for that he had so entirely abandoned himself to sensuality and dissipation, that he expended on his own selfish gratification the principal portion of the national revenue; while his whole thoughts were so absorbed by these pursuits that he seldom, and even then at the most inopportune moments, ever suffered a serious reflection or representation to divert him from his mistresses or his amusements; and that in order to organize an army he must either sell or mortgage the royal domains, or exhaust the kingdom by the most fearful exactions; that all France accused his supineness for the misfortunes which had recently supervened; and that, moreover, there were reasons for suspecting that a powerful prince of his family was about to abandon his allegiance.

This communication at once determined the Venetian senators. Aware that they could place implicit trust in the report of their representative, they announced to the pope their readiness to abandon the cause of a monarch who was thus careless of his own interests; and on the 3d of August, a general European league was signed against France, whereby the several sovereigns bound themselves to mutual support in their respective aggressions or reclaimers.

A new cause of anxiety, moreover, presented itself at this time, in the jeopardy of the island of Rhodes, where the knights of St. John of Jerusalem had established themselves for the avowed purpose of carrying on a warfare against the Turks; in which they had for

some time been eminently successful under the brave and skilful guidance of their grand-master Villiers de l'Isle-Adam. Soliman, who had been elected to the sovereignty of Turkey during the preceding year, and who had already evinced his belligerent propensities by the invasion of the Hungarian frontiers, and the capture of Belgrade, had recently turned his attention towards Rhodes; and the grand-master, on becoming apprised of his hostile intentions, had hastened to fortify his stronghold, and had collected about him a number of his bravest knights in order to repel the attack. The Turkish force proved, however, to be overwhelming; no less than three hundred vessels, with two hundred thousand troops, being despatched against the Christians, which were shortly followed by the sultan himself, to whom the capture of this stronghold was important alike as a matter of safety and of religion.

The defence of the knights was worthy of their reputation; and for six entire months they held out against the gigantic enemy to whom they were opposed, in the full reliance that the princes of Christendom would not allow the declared champions of their holy faith to be defeated from lack of help. But in this trust they were unfortunately deceived; the jealous animosity which existed between the emperor and the French king rendering them severally averse to act in concert even in a cause which involved one of their dearest interests. In vain did the pope conjure them to lay aside their personal differences for the time, and to unite in protecting the safety of the church. They remained deaf to his appeal; and, ultimately, the total exhaustion both of provisions

and ammunition compelled the gallant grand-master to capitulate, and to retire with the slender remnant of his noble followers from the island which they had so bravely defended, (and whose ruined citadel and crumbling walls attested the perseverance with which they had been defended,) to Viterbo, where the pope offered them an asylum, until they could again establish themselves in a manner more befitting the dignity of their order; and where they ultimately remained, until, some years subsequently, Charles V, who was anxious to secure their services, made them a grant of the island of Malta.

Thus were things situated when the Maréchal de Lautrec arrived at court; and he had been sufficiently long absent to enable his enemies to enhance in the mind of the king every cause, or supposed cause, of complaint which could be adduced against him. The generals who had assisted in the taking of the Milanese, and who now saw all their prowess rendered unavailing, were loud in their censures, and joined the faction of the Duchess d'Angoulême in pouring out upon the head of the unlucky commander the full vial of their wrath; while the king himself, mortified by a defeat which afforded such just cause of triumph to his enemies, and incensed by this new cause of heart-burning and difficulty, did not attempt to oppose the reasonings of those who counselled him to refuse all communication with the maréchal, but immediately that his return to France was made known to him, preremptorily declared his determination to deny him all access to his presence.

M. de Lautrec,—he coldly remarked to the few faithful adherents of the unsuccessful general who still ventured

to urge the expediency of his not denying an audience to one who had served him long and faithfully before these last reverses,—M. de Lautrec could have nothing to communicate to his sovereign, save that he had basely betrayed the trust which had been reposed in him; and by his supineness or ignorance suffered the glory of France to be tarnished, not only in his own person, but in that of her king. In vain, for the first time, did even Madame de Châteaubriand implore, and weep; the love of the monarch for the fair Françoise de Foix was waxing old; and he had began to discover that the court, and even the city, contained many beauties no less attractive than the frail wife of M. de Châteaubriand. The chain already hung more loosely about him; and he was, moreover, awakened from a dream of pleasure by the apparition of one who came only to recal him to reflections ill-suited to the life of festivity and splendour in which he was indulging at the moment.

The favourite was not, however, to be thus baffled. Lautrec had relied upon her promise to reconcile him with the king; and she no sooner found her personal efforts to effect this reconciliation unavailing, than she turned for aid to the Duke de Bourbon, over whom her influence has been already stated. The moment was an inauspicious one for the connétable to interfere in so delicate a question, but he was aware that the Duchess d'Angoulême was untiring in her efforts to ruin not only the young countess herself, but all her family; and this consciousness sufficed to decide him. Since the commencement of his secret negotiations with the emperor he had considered it expedient to appear more frequently

in the circle of the king, where he affected entirely to overlook the coldness with which he was received, and revenged himself by an exhibition of splendour which was gall and wormwood to the spirit of Louise de Savoie; and the more so that his general popularity had been rather increased than diminished since the commencement of their legal struggle. Bourbon was aware also of the primary cause of the disasters in Milan, and he well knew the anxiety of the duchess-mother to prevent all confidential communications between her son and the maréchal; and thus doubly urged, on the one side by his passion for Françoise de Foix, and on the other by his desire to humble Madame d'Angoulême, he at once promised to make the cause of Lautrec his own, and to obtain for him the desired and important interview.

It was not, however, without considerable difficulty that he succeeded; and that he eventually did so is probably to be ascribed to the conviction of Francis that it would be dangerous to incur the further resentment of so powerful a noble. The audience was therefore granted, but the king's reception of the maréchal was stern and ungracious.

"You come to tell me, Sir, that you are beaten;" he commenced, without replying to the profound salutation of M. de Lautrec, who had paused at the very threshold of the apartment; "that through your carelessness and want of zeal you have sacrificed many of my bravest generals, victimized a gallant army, and lost one of her finest provinces to France. You might have spared both me and yourself so dishonourable a recital. Your despatches have told me more than enough already; and

my time will be better spent in endeavouring to repair the fault of which you have been guilty, than in listening to your excuses."

"I am at a loss to know by what act of my own I have merited such a reception from your majesty;" said the maréchal firmly.

"How, Sir!" exclaimed Francis with increasing vehemence; "do you ask the reason of a displeasure which you might have anticipated? Have you not lost the Milanese? Have you not tarnished the glory of the French arms? Have you not—" he paused for an instant; and before he could resume his reproaches, Lautrec interposed proudly—

"No, Sire; I am guiltless of each and all of these accusations. That the Milanese is in the hands of your majesty's enemies, is unfortunately too certain; but the loss is to be attributed rather to your majesty than to myself. Your cavalry were eighteen months in arrear of pay; and I had already warned both your majesty and your ministers, that unless I received a supply of money within a given period, it would be impossible for me to enforce obedience, or to prevent desertion. If, therefore, I was thus apprehensive of the effect of this destitution upon the troops of France, fighting under the banners of their own king, and jealous of their own glory, your majesty may believe that I had small faith in the fidelity of the Swiss, who, eager only for gain, were little likely to sacrifice their individual interests to those of a foreign sovereign; nor did I over-rate the danger. By those mercenaries, clamorous to replace by rapine the wages which had been withheld from them, I was fated

to endure the mortification of being compelled to give battle to the enemy at a disadvantage; and to see my authority disregarded at the moment of danger, only to find myself abandoned by the very troops to whom I owed this jeopardy, and who might have been secured to our cause had I been enabled to satisfy their claims. You will pardon my warmth, Sire; but my only fault—and I admit it to have been a grievous one—was my weakness in according faith to promises which I now find were made only to betray me."

"And the four hundred thousand crowns, M. le Maréchal?" exclaimed the king somewhat less sharply; "Surely they might, had they been properly dispensed, have silenced these clamours for a time."

"They would have done more;" replied Lautrec; "they would have saved the duchy; but no portion of that promised supply ever crossed the Alps."

"Let M. de Semblançay be instantly summoned;" cried Francis with a kindling eye to the usher on duty; "It may be that we have done you injustice, M. le Maréchal; and yet—there must be some mistake: the Baron de Semblançay is an old and tried subject; he has never yet failed either me or my predecessors. None knew better than he the difficulty with which so large a sum was raised, nor the importance of its immediate transmission. Come forward, father, come forward;" he continued, as the old Minister of Finance, whom he was accustomed thus to address, and for whom he affected an attachment exceeding even that of a sovereign towards his most favoured subject, made his appearance at the threshold. "What is this which M. de Lautrec tells us?

He asserts that the four hundred thousand crowns raised by my order for the supply of the army of Italy, never reached his camp! Through what channel were they transmitted?"

"M. le Maréchal has rightly informed your majesty;" said de Semblançay. "Her highness the duchess claimed the money as I was about to expedite it, by virtue of her authority as regent of the kingdom; and I hold her receipt for the whole sum."

"My mother!" murmured Francis, as a red spot rose to his brow; "there must be some mistake; but she can doubtlessly explain it. Follow me, M. le Ministre."

The usher threw back the heavy tapestry which veiled the door of the audience-chamber, and the king disappeared behind it with a rapid step, followed by M. de Semblançay.

When they reached the private apartments of Madame d'Angoulême, she rose with a smile to welcome her son, but Francis was too much excited to waste time in empty courtesies: "Do you know what you have done, Madam?" he exclaimed, as he threw himself upon a seat; "You have lost me the Milanese."

The duchess raised her fine eyes in astonishment. "Your majesty is in error;" she said with a slight sneer; "that was a feat reserved for M. de Lautrec—for the brother of Madame de Châteaubriand."

"I repeat, Madam, that you have lost me the Milanese, by withholding the supplies which I had destined for my troops."

"I deny the charge;" said the duchess haughtily; "Who dares to accuse me of this?"

"M. de Semblançay is my informant;" was the reply of the king, as he glanced alternately at his mother and the venerable minister.

"How, Sir!" exclaimed Louise de Savoie, with a frown which might have paralysed a less firm spirit than that of the old baron; "dare you assert that I have held back the monies of the state?"

"It is at least certain, Madam;" replied M. de Semblançay; "that the sum of four hundred thousand crowns, destined by his majesty for the service in the Milanese, was paid over by me into your hands, at your express command; and that I hold your receipt, which I demanded at the time."

"But that sum, M. le Ministre;" said the duchess, fixing her eyes steadily upon those of the old statesman, as if to prompt his answer; "that sum, you are aware, was due to me, and was the amount of the savings of many years, placed in your hands for better security, and of which I chanced at that particular moment to stand in need. You should have explained this matter to the king."

The minister was silent.

"Why did you not inform me of so important a circumstance, M. de Semblançay?" asked Francis impatiently. "We might then have applied some remedy; whereas the evil is now beyond recal. Why did you not at once acquaint me with the whole of the affair?"

"I was not aware, Sir;" was the steady reply; "that her highness believed herself to have any claim upon the money in question, or that she had been in the habit of limiting her outlay within her means."

"Do you intend the king to understand that I had not entrusted you with that sum?" asked Louise de Savoie emphatically.

"Assuredly, Madam. It is my first duty to justify myself to my sovereign; and I therefore, with all due respect for your highness, religiously declare that I have never held in my hands monies which were your private property."

"Have a care, Sir!" exclaimed the duchess, in a tone of menace; but before she could proceed to give utterance to the threat that quivered on her lips, the young king had sprung up;—

"Enough, enough!" he said, with an emotion which he was unable to control; "we need not aggravate an evil which is already too great. Let this subject never be renewed; and may we in future better understand how to uphold our common interests."

The upright old minister was not, however, to be thus silenced, and he forthwith insisted that commissioners should be appointed to examine the public accounts, and to report the result of their labours to the king; thus forcing upon him the conviction of his own honesty and the treachery of his mother; a pertinacity which was never forgiven by the vindictive duchess, who felt that the confidence which had hitherto been placed in her by her son must be seriously shaken by such an exposure.

Nevertheless, she did not hesitate to complain that she had been subjected to an affront which it was the duty of Francis to avenge; and she even urged him to displace M. de Semblançay: but the annoyance to which he had been subjected through her avarice, and her desire to

injure the Maréchal de Lautrec even at the expense of his own honour, was too galling and too recent to render her expostulations successful, and he firmly refused to commit so flagrant an act of injustice. A vengeance like that of Louise de Savoie could, however, afford to wait. She was aware of the fickle nature of Francis, who, unlike herself, was incapable of nourishing a lasting passion either of love or hate; and she felt that death alone could deprive her of her victim. Nor had the venerable minister a less inveterate enemy in the Chancellor Duprat, who was continually thwarted in his measures by the uncompromising probity of his colleague; and who gladly made common cause with Madame d'Angoulême when he ascertained her enmity against him.

Once more Madame de Châteaubriand triumphed. The king, on his next interview with Lautrec, assured him that he was perfectly exonerated from all blame; and a fresh struggle commenced between the mother and the mistress. The court was thus divided into two separate factions; at the head of one was Louise de Savoie, M. de Savoie her brother, the chancellor, and Bonnivet; who, despite his passion for the fair favourite, could not resist the blandishments of the duchess, but who laboured assiduously to secure her interest in the furtherance of his own views of ambition and aggrandizement, and who was further bound to her through their mutual hatred of Bourbon. It was at her instigation, and with her assistance, that he had built the magnificent château to which we have already alluded as so great a mortification to the connétable; with her sanction that he encouraged the profligacy of the king—

the more readily, perhaps, because he was not sorry to detach him from Madame de Châteaubriand, although Francis either had, or affected to have, remained blind to their mutual attachment, even when it had long ceased to be matter of surmise; and by her influence that he was enabled to pursue a course of reckless and extravagant ostentation, which rendered him the wonder and the envy of all the less fortunate courtiers; while to the party of the duchess-mother were also attached the young and idle nobility, to whom the freedom of her circle, and the beauty of the women whom she collected about her, formed a greater attraction than they could find elsewhere.

The faction of Madame de Châteaubriand was less numerous, but still formidable. Her own brothers, and all the most celebrated generals of the time, were in her train; and while in the licentious court of Madame d'Angoulême nothing was discussed save love and pleasure; honour and renown were the leading topics among the customary guests of Françoise de Foix.

And amid all this rivalry and bitterness of spirit, the patient queen lived on in purity and piety, weeping over the evil that she saw, and thankful for the peace which she was enabled to preserve about her. Attached, even from her childhood, to the Duke de Bourbon, as to a loved and honoured brother, she could not forego the hope of still claiming him by a title which he had long borne in her heart, and consequently continued her efforts to unite him with the princess Rénée. Nor was the duke insensible to her regard, or to the pain which she evinced at the persecution to which he was subjected. She was the one bond which yet linked him to his country; the

one and only object which aroused a feeling of remorse within him as he reflected upon the enormity of his revenge. But to his other mortifications had been added that of learning that the king's mother had obtained so great an influence over the mind of the princess, as to induce her to declare that she could no longer entertain the idea of an alliance with a noble, who must, should the legal proceedings instituted against him prove fatal to his claims, become one of the poorest princes in Europe. Yet still the good queen trusted to overcome these difficulties; and whenever the duke appeared at court, he found his warmest welcome ever proceed from her lips.

Fresh demands were at this period made on the attention of the French king, by the reduced and famished state of the garrison which, under Jacques de Daillon, Seigneur de Lude,[1] had during the space of an entire year kept the Spanish army in check before Fontarabia, but which had now become so utterly exhausted by fatigue and famine that he announced the impossibility of further resistance unless he could be immediately relieved. The fortress was surrounded on all sides by the enemy; and although numerous attempts

[1] Jacques de Daillon, Seigneur de Lude, was senechal of Anjou, and captain of fifty men-at-arms. He distinguished himself greatly in the defence of Bresse against the Venetians, during the reign of Louis XII, by whom he had been entrusted with the government of that province; having maintained himself for ten days in the citadel, after the enemy, by effecting an entrance through one of the great sewers, had obtained possession of the town. He was also celebrated for his gallantry throughout the wars of Italy, Lombardy, and Ferrara. He was the son of the governor and favourite of Louis XI; and the father of Guy de Daillon, governor of Poitou, who in his youth had been standard-bearer to the Duke de Nemours.

had already been made to convey supplies to him by sea, all had failed through the vigilance of the Spanish privateers who guarded the coast; and disease and want were making hourly havoc among the already diminished troops.

In this emergency, although once more dreaming the conquest of the Milanese, and anxious to collect a powerful army for that expedition, Francis lost not a moment in despatching M. de Châtillon at the head of a large force to the relief of the besieged garrison; but this reinforcement was delayed by the sudden and serious illness of its commander, which soon terminated fatally, and rendered it necessary to halt the troops upon their march until another general could arrive to take the command; a circumstance which had nearly proved fatal to the success of the enterprise. The Marquis de la Palice, however, by whom M. de Châtillon was replaced, hastened to repair the evil, and at once advanced to Fontarabia, although the arrival of a force which had been despatched by sea to cooperate with him, had been prevented by contrary winds.

As he approached the beleaguered city he found the Spanish army encamped upon the river-bank, and prepared to dispute his passage; but, resolved to effect, if possible, the immediate rescue of the unfortunate garrison, he would not suffer the inequality of numbers to delay his purpose, and accordingly commenced a heavy fire of artillery upon the enemy's lines from the opposite side of the stream. The guns were skilfully worked, and created so much havoc, that the Spaniards gave way, and under cover of the smoke he succeeded in crossing;

when being opposed by Count William de Furstemberg at the head of six thousand lansquenets, he made so desperate a charge that they were completely routed, and despite their numerical superiority were compelled to retreat in disorder to the mountains.

The enemy thus driven back, the marquis entered the city in triumph, with his supplies both of provisions and arms; and having restored the garrison to its former strength, replaced the exhausted but gallant Count de Lude in his command by M. Franget,[1] who had been the lieutenant-general of the Count de Châtillon, and in whose arms he had died. The sufferings of the little garrison which had so pertinaciously held out month after month, had been of the most frightful description. After having for some time subsisted upon their horses, the troops were compelled to have recourse to every species of vermin, such as cats, rats, and dogs; and ultimately, when even these failed, to devour the skins of the animals they had slain, and the parchments in the public offices, which they boiled down as the general food of both officers and men. The appearance of the survivors was consequently wretched in the extreme; and M. de Lude hastened, immediately upon

[1] Captain Franget was a soldier of experience and tried valour; who, however, suffered himself to tarnish his military reputation by delivering up Fontarabia to the enemy, after a brief siege of eight days. Francis I. was so indignant at this act of cowardice, that he condemned him to lose his head; but was dissuaded from carrying out his threat by the entreaties of M. de Lude, who pleaded the gallantry of his former achievements. The sentence was consequently commuted to expulsion from the service. His sword was broken, his military rank annulled, and himself exiled from the court.

the appointment of his successor, to pay his respects to his sovereign,—by whom he was cordially and honourably received,—and thence to his estates, in order to recruit his strength, and to recover from the effects of his long and melancholy privation.

The intelligence of the relief of Fontarabia somewhat tempered the exultation of the emperor, whose recent successes in Italy had led him to anticipate equal good fortune beyond the Pyrenees; and he at once determined to counteract the partial triumph of Francis by urging forward the compact into which, through the medium of the Duke de Bourbon, he had already entered with Henry VIII. He soon, however, discovered from the tone of the correspondence into which he entered for this purpose, palpable evidence of the changed feelings of the English cardinal, who had never forgiven Charles for the falsification of his pledges regarding the papacy, and the substitution of the comparatively obscure Cardinal of Tortosa for himself upon the throne of St. Peter; a substitution which, as he was well aware, had been effected through his sole agency. Nevertheless Charles did not despair; he had studied the nature of the man with whom he had to deal; and once more he revived the question of the triple crown, assuring the English minister that the age and infirmities of Adrian VI. rendered it impossible that he should long enjoy the dignity to which he had attained, while Wolsey himself, still in the prime of life, was his only fitting successor; and pledging himself that should the cardinal exert his influence to induce the English king to accept his proposition of a treaty of alliance against France, he might

himself depend on his own support upon the decease of the reigning pope.

This correspondence, which was carried on throughout a couple of months, ultimately so changed its character, that Charles, satisfied his point was gained with the minister, resolved once more to visit England in person, and explain in detail his views and projects to the sovereign; a piece of consummate policy which he carried into effect by landing at Dover near the end of May; where he was received by Henry VIII. with as much cordiality as heretofore; and soon succeeded in rendering him equally anxious with himself for the invasion of the French territories. Mutual courtesies were exchanged between the two monarchs; Charles conferring upon the Earl of Surrey the commission of admiral in his dominions; and Henry investing his imperial guest with the order of the garter. Nor did the politic emperor fail, by every means in his power, to remove the mistrust of the cardinal legate, to whom he affected to explain the imperative reasons which had compelled him to favour the election of Adrian VI; and whose confidence he once more purchased by a life-pension of nine thousand golden crowns.

As a declaration of war against France became inevitable on the part of the English king after this compact with Charles, it was necessary to discover some pretext sufficiently plausible to justify a step which must necessarily involve the interests of all Europe; and eventually neither Henry nor his minister could devise any excuse more rational than a presumed indignity shown to the former as arbitrator between Francis and

the emperor, by the refusal of the French sovereign to give up Fontarabia at his suggestion; and the fact that Francis had permitted the Duke d'Aubigny to visit Scotland, where he had, as they alleged, excited an ill feeling against both Henry VIII. and his sister.

The latter argument was, perhaps, less flimsy than the first, inasmuch as it is certain that Francis, who had long suspected the bad faith of Henry, had, with a view of regaining the same influence over the Scotch which had been exercised by his predecessors, instead of leaving the regency of the kingdom during the minority of James V. in the hands of his mother Marguerite, the sister of Henry VIII, desired John, Duke d'Aubigny, the nephew of James III, to return at once to Scotland, and to claim his part in the government.

Although born a subject of France, the Scotch parliament at once recognised the right of the duke to share the regency with the queen-mother; and d'Aubigny, whose prejudices were all in favour of his native country, exerted himself to induce the nation to declare war against England; by which means, although he did not succeed in his attempt, he created considerable commotion on the border. Francis, meanwhile, deemed it expedient to write to the English monarch, asserting that the duke had acted without any authority from himself, and had even left France without his permission; but the reply of Henry VIII. not only denied his belief of the fact, but was, moreover, so studiously offensive in the terms of that denial, that every doubt as to the hostility which he bore him was removed from the mind of the French king.

Sir Thomas Cheyne, the English ambassador in France, received instructions in the month of May, to urge once more upon Francis the cession of Fontarabia, and to remonstrate with him upon his interference in Scotland; and as the king was at that moment absent from Paris, the minister demanded an audience of the Duchess d'Angoulême, to whom he declared the nature of the instructions which had reached him from his court; when Louise de Savoie expressed the strongest desire to effect a pacification between the two monarchs, reminding the ambassador of the confidence and good feeling which had existed between them so recently; and declaring that her son was anxious for its continuance. She, moreover, undertook to acquaint the king with what had passed during the interview, and to use all her influence to preserve a friendly understanding between the two countries.

In a subsequent audience of Francis himself, Sir Thomas Cheyne reiterated the demands and remonstrances of his sovereign; to which the French king replied as he had previously done by letter; and on an intimation from the ambassador, that, in the event of his declining to comply with the terms proposed by his master, and persisting in hostilities against the emperor, the English monarch would consider himself bound in conscience to declare against him, Francis proudly replied, that so long as Henry acted according to a sense of right and justice, he could ask no more; that the emperor had been the first aggressor, but that he had long seen with how little favour his own interests had been regarded by England during the conferences which had taken place at Calais; and that, unless Henry were

determined to award more even-handed justice for the future, he would do well to leave Charles and himself to settle their own differences. The emperor, he moreover declared, had no more right to the Milanese than he himself could advance to the kingdom of Spain; and that he esteemed himself the equal of Charles upon all points; and would have been both glad and able to serve Henry for his love alone, more heartily than his rival would do for both his love and his treasures. All he now asked, therefore, he said, was to be left free to follow out his own measures, and if this were conceded without foreign interference, he did not despair of rendering Charles "one of the poorest princes in Christendom."

The English ambassador, chagrined by the conviction that his errand was one of injustice, and convinced by the resolute attitude of the French king that he would not willingly make the required concessions, and thus involve himself in a peril of which the consequences might prove fatal to his throne, endeavoured to induce the admiral Bonnivet, who was present at the conference, to prevail upon his sovereign to accept the proposition for a truce which he was authorized to make; but the haughty favourite at once replied that he would rather see his master in his grave than urge him to a measure which involved his honour.

Thus foiled on all hands, Sir Thomas Cheyne next informed the king that the emperor, who was about to depart for Spain, had entrusted the protection of the Low Countries during his absence to the English monarch, a charge which he had agreed to undertake. But even this insidious measure did not bend the spirit of Francis,

who replied in a tone of biting sarcasm, that the emperor had resolved wisely, as there could be no doubt that Henry VIII. was far more capable of defending the realm than its own sovereign, while the arrangement afforded clear evidence of the political bias of both parties.

"Thus much, however;" he added; "I will still say; that I have in nowise deserved that your king should take part against me with my enemy; from our past friendship I looked for help rather than hindrance at his hands; but if there be no remedy, and that the king's highness will have it thus, I have no fear but that I shall be able to defend both myself and my realm with God's help; although, for his sake, I shall never again put faith in any prince living. Moreover, if he loses me now, I vow that henceforth he hath lost me for ever. But"— and for the first time his voice quivered for an instant—"I will not believe that he can play me false; for of myself I may truly declare that the extremity of this war doth not grieve me half so much as to lose a friend whom I esteemed beyond all others."

At the termination of the interview Francis returned to Lyons; and on the 29th of May, the English herald who had been despatched for that purpose, repaired thither, and in the palace of the archbishop, where the king had taken up his abode, made a formal declaration of war on the part of his royal master, to which Francis replied coldly and proudly; and hostilities forthwith commenced. The Earl of Surrey, at the head of the combined fleets of England and Spain, commenced his operations by destroying several of the coast towns of Normandy and Brittany; and then, abandoning his ships,

took the command of the troops on land, and proceeded to operate upon the French frontier; when he was joined by the Count de Buren, the lieutenant-general of the emperor in the Low Countries, their joint army amounting to eighteen thousand men.

Nevertheless, Francis evinced no uneasiness. He trusted that the strength of his frontier of Picardy, whose fortresses were efficiently armed and garrisoned, would suffice to arrest the progress of both the English and Flemish troops, while the Pyrenees defended him from the attacks of the Spaniards; and he still proceeded with the organization of the army with which he once more anticipated the conquest of the Milanese. The care of the seat of war was meanwhile confided to the Duke de Vendôme; and Francis availed himself of the threatened invasion to remove a silver screen erected by Louis XI. round the tomb of St. Martin, and to coin it into money for the payment of the troops.

While he was thus engaged he received intelligence that his generals had drawn the Duke d'Aerschott, and a strong party of the imperial troops, into a snare, from which they were not likely to escape, through the means of a soldier of the garrison of Guise, who was instructed by the Seigneur de Longueval, the governor, to volunteer to effect the entrance of the Flemish commander through a gate of the city which he was appointed to guard. Aerschott, having closely questioned the man, who professed great discontent with his position, and weariness of the service in which he was engaged, fell into the trap that had been laid for him; and arrangements were made, immediately after Easter, for profiting by the supposed

treason. The duke was to approach the city with a force of picked men on whom he could depend; while the Marquis de Fiennes, the governor of Flanders, was to make a demonstration against Térouanne, with a strong body of troops, in order to distract the attention of the French; and meanwhile, precautions had been taken that when Aerschott advanced upon the city, the Duke de Vendôme, the Marquis de Fleuranges, and Richard de la Pole, should cut off his retreat, and compel him to lay down his arms.

Had Vendôme executed this manœuvre without informing the king of his design, there is every reason to suppose that it would have proved successful; but Francis had no sooner learnt his purpose, and been convinced of its feasibility, than he determined to assist in person at the capture of the duke, and despatched orders that no steps should be taken in the business under any pretext until he could arrive upon the spot; an object which he effected by travelling post, on the very evening before the enterprise was to take place. The mere fact, however, of his sudden appearance with the army, when he was known to have been at Blois only two days previously, sufficed to arouse the suspicions of the imperialists; and, although Aerschott had already commenced his march, he immediately halted, and abandoned the undertaking, convinced that some ambush had been prepared for him; and thus, through his own puerile vanity, Francis lost an opportunity of seriously weakening the strength of his adversaries.

Mortified by a failure which he had himself induced, the king then directed M. de Vendôme to advance with his forces, and relieve Térouanne, before which Fiennes

had sat down, little anticipating so formidable an enemy; the militia of Ghent, moreover, who formed a portion of his force, and who now saw themselves threatened by a peril upon which they had not calculated, immediately abandoned his camp, and retreated beyond the Lys; thus creating a disorder of which the Duke de Vendôme was about to take advantage, when M. de Brion, galloping up to the lines, once more commanded him to retard the attack until the arrival of the king, who was preparing to join in the battle. Mortified as he was, the duke was compelled to obey; and before Francis reached the field M. de Fiennes had time to extricate himself, and to secure a safe position.

Notwithstanding these failures, the French king had as yet experienced no positive check; and Surrey, disheartened by the slow and unsatisfactory progress of the war, in which he had reaped neither honour nor success, while he had sustained severe loss, proceeded to lay siege to the town of Hesdin, of which he thought himself secure, as the fortifications were imperfect, and the garrison comprised only thirty gendarmes, and about seventeen hundred foot soldiers. Herein, however, he deceived himself, as the Sire du Bier, by whom it was commanded, made so gallant a resistance with his slender garrison, that after he had spent a fortnight before the walls he was compelled to raise the siege; the incessant rains having seriously affected his troops, while they had gained no evident advantage over the enemy; and thus foiled in an enterprise which he had originally regarded as insignificant, he abandoned the attempt, and marched homeward with his army, disgracing both himself and

his cause by the wanton and needless cruelties that were committed on their route.

Under these circumstances Francis considered himself once more at liberty to pursue his measures against Milan, and to detach from the army of M. de Vendôme the Duke of Suffolk, known in France as the White Rose, the pretender to the throne of England, whose claims he now openly espoused, with his lansquenets and two or three thousand Picards, and to despatch them to Lyons, where the army, destined to invade Italy, were to assemble in the month of August. Bonnivet, with six thousand French troops, was at the same time to cross Mount Cenis, and to establish himself at Suza; while Montmorency was to join him there with twelve thousand infantry, which he was commissioned to raise in Switzerland. Francis himself was to join the army near Turin; and meanwhile Prosper Colonna, who had been appointed general of the Italian league, was busied in fortifying the passes of Tesino, in order to defend the entrance of the Milanese.

The French king had not, however, reached Lyons when he was met by Louis de Brézé, the Senechal of Normandy, who apprised him that his person was in danger from a plot which had been formed against him, and which involved the safety of his kingdom.

Startled, but not convinced, Francis desired to be more fully informed of its nature and extent; upon which De Brézé confided to him that he had gained his intelligence from two Norman gentlemen who had been tampered with by a powerful prince of his own family, who had endeavoured to induce them to facilitate the

entrance of the English troops into their province; a fact which the king had no sooner ascertained than he determined to delay his departure from France until he had fathomed the whole conspiracy.

Before he again reached Amboise the Duchess d'Angoulême had summoned the two informers to her presence, when, throwing off their previous reserve, they openly accused the Duke de Bourbon of treason, and revealed all they knew. The consternation of Francis was unbounded. He saw too late the error which he had committed, when he drove so proud a spirit to exasperation; but, nevertheless, he as yet possessed no proof of the truth of the accusation, and he resolved to judge for himself of its plausibility.

The opportunity soon presented itself. The duke was, as we have already stated, the frequent guest of Queen Claude; and a day or two after his own return to Amboise, Francis was apprised that he was at table with her; upon which he entered the apartment abruptly, and when Bourbon would have risen, desired him to resume his seat, saying sarcastically; "So, our cousin of Bourbon is about to take a second wife. Is it not so?"

The duke calmly replied in the negative.

"Nay, deny it not;" persisted the king sharply; "we know all your plans, Sir, even those which you have concocted with the emperor; nor are we likely to overlook them."

Upon this the connétable once more rose, exclaiming: "You threaten me, Sir, when I have done nothing to deserve it. Suffer me to withdraw;" and as he spoke he made a low obeisance, and left the apartment. In

another moment he mounted and rode from the palace attended by all the noblemen of the court, and on the following day he retired to one of his palaces.

Convinced that he was suspected, he lost no more time in rallying about him those friends and adherents upon whom he felt that he could depend. He knew that his life was no longer safe, and that he was indebted even for the present reprieve to an indiscretion on the part of Francis of which he had not calculated the consequences. It was in vain that many of those who were attached to his interests, especially the Count de St. Vallier,[1] the father-in-law of M. de Brézé, (who in his old age had married his daughter, the young and beautiful Diana of Poitiers,) represented to him that by bearing arms against his sovereign he was not only about to sacrifice all that was dearest to him—country, kindred, and friends; but also, in the event of failure, to subject himself to an ignominious death; to make common cause with an enemy who had hitherto trembled at his name; and to tarnish the glory which it had been the labour of his whole life to secure. They admitted the persecution to which he had been subjected, but reminded him that it was the result of a hatred induced by the passion which he had inspired in the breast of a vindictive woman; that the king himself was well disposed towards him, and had only been rendered harsh by circumstances; and that when the kingdom was threatened with invasion, it had a right to look to him as one of its strongest bulwarks.

[1] Jean de Poitiers, Count de St. Vallier, was captain of the king's archers.

In reply to these expostulations Bourbon bitterly expatiated upon the wrong and indignity of which he had been made the victim; and bade them remember that he had been despoiled of his estates, thwarted in his projects, injured even in his affections, and that no alternative was left to him. He declared that he no longer placed confidence in the king, who had no will save that of his mother; and no hope for himself while she retained her influence in France. "Better, far better;" he exclaimed vehemently; "to trust to a prince who is his own ruler, to live a man among men, than to be subjected to the wayward fancies of a licentious woman, who knows no law but her own vices. You weep, De Vallier; you, my friend and my kinsman; but I can weep no longer. I have not shaped my own destiny—it has been hewn out for me, and I have only to follow it to the end. I know that none of you will betray me; I believe that many of you will be willing to share my fortunes; and I say to all, that let them lead to which point they may, be it a throne or a scaffold, I shall never cease to remember with gratitude and affection those who not only felt my wrongs, but helped me to avenge them."

The tone of his address was so impassioned, the grievances of which he complained so notorious, and his person so popular, that it is scarcely wonderful that all who heard him should at once make common cause in his behalf; and this effected, he proceeded for the moment to his estate at Moulins, feigning severe illness, in order that he should not be summoned to attend the king to Italy; a command which he would have been unable to evade.

CHAPTER XIX.

[1523.]

BOURBON IS SUSPECTED BY THE KING—FRANCIS DETERMINES ON HIS ARREST—VISITS HIM AT MOULINS—DOUBLE DISSIMULATION—FRANCIS RETURNS TO AMBOISE—BOURBON'S SICK-CHAMBER—M. LE WARTZ ABANDONS HIS POST—BOURBON ESCAPES TO CHANTILLE—THE HUNTING-PARTY—FIRST MISUNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE KING AND MADAME CHÂTEAUBRIAND—MEDIATION OF MARGUERITE DE VALOIS—A CONSPIRATOR—THE KING AND M. DE POMPÉRANT—M. DE POMPÉRANT LEAVES AMBOISE—ARREST OF THE COUNT DE ST. VALLIER—INDIGNATION OF FRANCIS—HE DESPATCHES TROOPS AGAINST BOURBON—BOURBON ESCAPES TO MANTUA—FATE OF HIS ADHERENTS—THE ENGLISH AND SPANISH INVADE FRANCE—ARE COMPELLED TO RETIRE—THE COMMAND OF THE ARMY OF ITALY IS CONFERRED UPON BONNIVET—CONFISCATION OF BOURBON'S ESTATES—A GASCONNADE—TRIAL OF THE CONSPIRATORS—DIANA OF POITIERS—HER MARRIAGE—HER NEW HOME—SHE ARRIVES AT COURT TO INTERCEDE FOR THE LIFE OF HER FATHER—HAS AN AUDIENCE OF FRANCIS—THE COMMUTED SENTENCE—DIANA AND HER BIOGRAPHERS.

CHAPTER XIX.

[1523.]

Bourbon had not miscalculated the intentions of the king, whose suspicions of his loyalty becoming hourly stronger, had resolved to possess himself of his person; but, as Francis could effect nothing against him in a province where the will of the duke was the only law, and as he was himself about to travel with an escort too weak to undertake his capture, he resolved to await the arrival of the troops, which, under the command of De la Pole, were on their way to Lyons. In the mean time remembering, perhaps, the provocation which the duke had received, and anxious to ascertain if it were yet possible to regain him, he determined to deviate from his direct route, and to visit him at Moulins, where he might be enabled to judge for himself of the probability of such an event.

On his arrival he was received with every demonstration of respect and deference, and introduced into the chamber of his host by M. de Pompérant, where he found him in bed, complaining of severe and painful indisposition. The king condoled with him upon his sufferings, and asked various questions as to the nature of the attack,

which were calmly and readily answered by the duke; after which, seating himself beside his pillow, he said gently and kindly; "I am informed, cousin of Bourbon, that you have been harassed and annoyed by recent circumstances; but you are wrong to let them weigh upon your mind, for whatever may be the result of the suit, and the decision of the parliament, so long as you serve me loyally, you shall not be despoiled. I have heard, moreover, that you have been in treaty with the emperor, forgetting your allegiance as a French subject, and the duty which you owe to your sovereign; but in this rumour I place no faith. Your rank as a prince of the blood, and, still more, the great deeds which you have already accomplished, render such treachery impossible; and I no more credit the report, than you, on your side, should believe that I could see you deprived of your possessions."

Bourbon was not, however, to be duped with words. He had instantly comprehended the purpose of the king in thus visiting him; and he accordingly replied with equal dissimulation;—admitting that he had indeed received offers from the emperor through one of his agents, of which he had resolved to inform his majesty when he could do so personally; but that, situated as he had lately been, he had not chosen to entrust a secret of that importance to a third person, and had, consequently, awaited the arrival of the king himself in order to communicate it. He followed up this assurance by disclosing so much of what had passed as proved the anxiety of Charles to attach him to his interests, but was careful to avoid every thing which might tend to com-

promise either himself or his friends; and, finally, he bewailed his misfortune in thus being overtaken by sickness at a moment when he should have been by the side of his sovereign; concluding, however, by assuring Francis that his physicians, notwithstanding the severity of the attack, had decided that it would not prove of long duration; and that, in the course of a week or ten days, he would be able to travel as far as Lyons, by easy stages in a litter.

The suspicions of the king were in a great degree dissipated. The manner of the connétable was so calm and self-possessed, and his account of the transaction between himself and the emperor so simple and unembarrassed, that, as he rose to take his leave, he urged him to be cautious of his health, and told him that he should await with impatience his arrival at Lyons.

Having, however, decided to return to Amboise to have a parting interview with his mother, whom he had again appointed regent of the kingdom during his absence, Francis took the precaution to send a confidential person, M. Perrot de la Brétonniere, Seigneur de Wartz, to Moulins, ostensibly for the purpose of ascertaining the progress of the duke towards convalescence, but with strict orders not to lose sight of him after he was able to leave his bed, and to bring him to Lyons with all speed. This new attention on the part of the king was perfectly appreciated by Bourbon, who was aware that De Wartz was merely sent as a spy, of whom he must rid himself at the first convenient opportunity; and he consequently affected to suffer under constant relapses of his malady, although he expressed his earnest

hope that he should ere long be enabled to join the army; and evinced the greatest interests in its movements. He constantly complained bitterly of the restraint of a sick-room; and, on one occasion, even ventured to leave the house leaning upon the arm of his unwelcome guest, expressing his belief that the effect of the fresh air would restore his strength. On the following day he, however, complained of increased illness; and when left for a moment alone with M. de Wartz, told him gloomily that he began to perceive that his physicians had concealed the truth, and that his disease was likely to prove fatal.

The royal emissary was thoroughly deceived; and believing that his attendance upon a death-bed could in no way serve the king, he took his leave, and returned to Lyons, whence he forwarded a despatch, informing Francis that the duke was in extremity. Fresh and convincing proofs had, however, by this time reached the ears of the monarch of the intended treason of the connétable, and his reply to the communication was a stringent order to his agent to return immediately to his post; but when the letter reached Lyons, although it was obeyed upon the instant, M. de Wartz was already too late, for he found, upon his arrival at Moulins, that the duke had retired to his castle of Chantelle, a strong fortress, in which he was perfectly secure. To add to his mortification, he was moreover informed by a peasant whom he encountered on his way, that Bourbon had passed Varenne on horseback, apparently in good health; and he thus found that his mission had signally failed.

Meanwhile such of the nobles as were implicated in the conspiracy had remained at court, in order to avert

suspicion; and Francis had no sooner reached Amboise, where the queen, the regent, and the Duchess d'Alençon were then residing, than he determined before his return to Lyons to give a hunting-party in the forest of Bussy; it being a marked feature in his character never to suffer public affairs, whatever their importance, to interfere with his private pleasures. The royal circle, consequently, removed to Chambord; but even in this, his favourite residence, it was apparent to those about him that the king was ill at ease. There was a cloud upon his brow; and occasionally he glanced round him with a searching expression, as though he sought to read the hearts of the gay and glittering courtiers who crowded the saloons.

The morning which had been fixed for the hunt was brilliant, and a numerous bevy of fair dames, all attired for the sport, were flitting through the great hall, or surrounding the chair of the queen, who sat in the centre of her ladies, engaged upon some tapestry work; for the birth of her third son, the Prince Charles, was yet too recent to admit of her taking part in the fatiguing pleasures of the day, even had her tranquil tastes led her to desire it. The young nobles, eager for the sport, were glancing impatiently from time to time into the court-yard, to watch the progress of the preparations; and, meanwhile, Francis himself stood in the deep recess of a bay window, conversing with the Countess de Châteaubriand, who, in her ample riding-dress and richly plumed hat, looked even more lovely than was her wont. But still it was evident that the flattery which she would have prized the most deeply did not meet her ear upon

this occasion. The whole air and attitude of the king were cold and repelling; and, although none were indiscreet enough to approach the recess, still the name of Lautrec, frequently and bitterly repeated by the king, and the tears which stood in the eyes of the countess, sufficed to convince those who overheard a passing word, or looked for an instant towards their retreat, that the vexation of spirit by which the young monarch was oppressed had induced him to utter some allusion to the disastrous war in Italy, which he was about to make an effort to redeem.

Françoise de Foix was still the perfection of loveliness, but she had already become aware that she was rapidly losing her power over the volatile monarch, whom her charms had hitherto enslaved; and as she stood beside him on that sunny morning, and saw that her smile had no longer power to dispel the shadow which had gathered upon his countenance, she felt her spirit sicken, although her courage did not fail.

"Nay, Sire;" she said gently, raising her large blue eyes appealingly to his, as the king paused after an outbreak of indignant anger; "surely you are too harsh. Consider the difficulties with which he had to contend, the privations which he was called upon to suffer. You know his zeal, his loyalty, and his devotion; do not, I beseech you, attribute to him the reverses which would with more justice be visited elsewhere."

"You talk glibly, Madam;" was the stern reply; "and I have, perhaps, given you licence to do so, by countenancing the madness of a man to whom, at your entreaty, I gave the government of the Milanese; a

weakness which has cost me the friendship of the Duke de Bourbon, the most powerful of my subjects—a man who has requited me by the loss of the duchy which was entrusted to him."

"But who would have saved it, Sire, and even augmented its importance;" said the countess, with that bold eloquence which women can always command in defence of those who are dear to them; "if the promised supplies had not been intercepted."

"Enough, Madam, enough;" said the king, as he turned away; "the real criminal is yet to be detected; neither you nor I can decide where the blame may lie. Let it suffice that it is not too late to punish the guilty."

Madame de Châteaubriand had presumed too much upon her favour. A single year back, and she might have hazarded such an allusion; but now she saw her error. Only when blinded by passion can the great brook or forgive any insinuation against their peers; and Francis had passed this point with the fair accuser of his mother. Conscious, also, that he could not maintain his position, he was irritated by a pertinacity which compelled him to stand on the defensive; and being unaccustomed to conceal his feelings, his contracted brow and flashing eye betrayed to the fair favourite the whole extent of her imprudence.

Trembling and terrified, the countess in her turn averted her face, and endeavoured to conceal the tears which were rolling over her blenched cheeks; while Francis, either unconscious or careless of the emotion he had excited, leaned listlessly over the balcony, and affected to gaze out upon the chase beyond.

The entrance of Madame d'Alençon aroused the king from his reverie; and when she had paid her respects to the queen, he beckoned her to his side. "You have arrived at a fortunate moment, Marguerite;" he said, making an effort to throw off the gloom by which he was oppressed; "I am weary of waiting, and have been amusing myself by a project which will, I think, delight you."

"And yet neither yourself nor Madame de Châteaubriand appeared to me to be particularly joyous when I glanced towards you;" said the duchess playfully; "but what is this charming project?"

"I will, should my life be spared, pull down this gloomy fortress, which is a blot upon so fair a landscape, and erect a palace better suited to the loves and graces than a mass of old gray towers and battlemented walls. We want gardens, too, and we will have them of regal dimensions; while, instead of the insignificant stream which now disfigures the domain, we will turn the waters of the Loire, and compel them to lend their aid in its embellishment."

"The design is indeed magnificent!" exclaimed Marguerite; "and it will be glorious to celebrate in the new palace the recovery of the Milanese."

"Which is the more probable, *mignonne*, as I shall, on this occasion, undertake it myself;" said Francis; "and I trust that for the future I may be able to hold what I have gained."

The duchess, struck by the remark, glanced towards the favourite, and at once became convinced that she was not unconnected with the evident irritation of the king.

The nature of her education had rendered her very indulgent to the errors of her sex; and, conscious that the disgrace of Françoise de Foix would only involve a new and perhaps a more dangerous *liaison*, she hastened to avert the impending storm, by sundry flattering comments upon the costume and beauty of the countess.

"Madame de Châteaubriand has to-day excelled herself;" she said admiringly, as she swept aside the clustering feathers of her riding-hat, and passed her fingers caressingly through one of the long fair ringlets which they overshadowed; "She will be the very Dian of the woods!"

"Madame de Châteaubriand is always charming;" said the king, still gazing through the open window; "But we shall do well to pay our parting compliments to the queen at once, in order that no further time may be lost when the hunt is ready;" and as he spoke, he offered his hand to his sister, and led her to the upper end of the hall.

Françoise de Foix followed them with a glance which betrayed all the agony of her spirit; and then, feeling that she could no longer conceal her agitation, rapidly withdrew through a side-door.

She had scarcely left the recess when the Count de St. Vallier approached the window, and folding his arms upon the balcony, leaned out, apparently buried in deep and painful thought: he was not, however, long suffered to indulge his reverie; for ere many moments had elapsed, a noble, not attired in the fanciful costume of the hunt, but in a close travelling dress, placed himself at his side, and whispered anxiously; "My time grows short—on what have you determined?"

"I will share his fortunes, be they what they may;" said the captain of the king's archers.

"I expected no less. No friend of the duke would desert him at such a moment; far less one whom he loves as he does M. de St. Vallier."

"Are you about to return at once?"

"Instantly: you have pledged your word, and my mission is accomplished."

"M. de Pompérant;" said the king, as he crossed the hall; "you have adopted a strange costume for the forest. Do you not hunt the stag with us this morning?"

"Your majesty does me honour;" replied the companion of St. Vallier, bowing respectfully; "but I trust that I may be excused, having last night received a letter from M. de Bourbon, in which he urges me to return to him without delay."

A frown gathered upon the brow of Francis; "I am aware, Sir;" he said coldly; "that you belong to the household of the connétable, and that you owe him all fitting obedience; yet if I, alike his sovereign and yours, condescend to invite you to remain at Chambord, how then?"

"Then, Sire;" replied the noble, bowing still more profoundly; "I shall be compelled to delay my departure for Chantelle."

"How, Sir!" exclaimed Francis sharply; "Do I understand you? Has M. de Bourbon left Moulins to shut himself up in a fortress?"

"Sire, Chantelle is also a seigneurial residence."

"So I have heard;" pursued the king with a withering frown; "and doubtlessly as magnificent as it is secure. M. de Bourbon is an able tactician."

"The duke is sick both in body and mind, Sire."

"He travels promptly for an invalid;" was the sarcastic reply: "only a few days back he declared himself to be upon his death-bed, and now I learn that he has performed a journey. He may recover his mental sufferings as readily as his bodily ailments, Sir, if such be his will; for I myself condescended to be the physician of his mind, and to pledge my royal word that, by virtue of my sovereign authority, and on the honour of a gentleman, his sequestrated estates should be restored to him. Consequently he can need no better cure. But we are summoned to the chase; and now, Sir, I leave it to your own discretion to choose between us. You may join our sport, or retire, as you think best."

As he ceased speaking, Francis bowed to the queen, who rose as he withdrew; and strode from the hall attended by the courtly crowd which was to accompany him to the forest. M. de Pompérant shortly followed; but availing himself of the equivocal permission he had received, he mounted his horse in the inner court; and as the glittering party made their way towards Bussy, hastened in the direction of Chantelle with all the speed of his good steed.

This little outbreak of temper had apparently restored Francis to equanimity, for he not only reined up his horse beside that of Madame de Châteaubriand, but even exerted himself to dispel the effects of his late coldness; an attempt which was ere long successful; while the Duchess d'Alençon, who was passionately attached to the chase, galloped hither and thither over the green sward, until she contrived without observation to detach herself from the group immediately about the king.

"Ride on, ladies, ride on;" she said gaily, to some of her suite who were endeavouring to follow her erratic course; "the soul of the green wood is freedom from constraint;" and then, as she saw them successively obey, she beckoned to her side the venerable Count de St. Vallier, whom she affected to address in a loud voice.

"M. de Poitiers;" she said; "you are strangely churlish for a courtier. You know how long we have all been anxious to welcome your fair daughter, Madame la grande Sénéschale, to Amboise, and yet you do not summon her from her retreat in Normandy. How is this?"

"Diana is young and beautiful, Madame, while M. de Brézé is very old, very ugly, and but newly married."

"An admirable reason;" laughed the duchess as she shook back her streaming hair, and reined in her impatient palfrey; "while his sovereign is very young, very handsome, and—am I right, M. le Comte?"

St. Vallier bowed in silence.

"A truce, however, to this idle discourse;" said Madame d'Alençon suddenly, after a rapid glance about her. "You are ill at ease, M. de Poitiers."

"I, Madame!" exclaimed the count anxiously; "Why should I be so? How *could* I be so in your presence?"

"Disentangle the bridle of my horse;" said Marguerite de Valois; and as St. Vallier bent forward to obey, she murmured in his ear; "You are the old and tried friend of M. de Bourbon."

"He has few older, Madame, and none more sincere."

"You are also in his confidence ——"

"Such an admission at such a moment might be perilous, Madame."

"Not when made to me;" persisted the duchess; "you are aware that I also have a great regard for the connétable; and I confess to you that I am anxious on his account. And yet, even angered as he may be by recent events, I will not believe that the suspicion which now attaches to him can be justified. Bourbon is so great even in his failings, that although he may be quick to resent an injury, I am convinced that he would nevertheless be slow to revenge it."

"The duke is as just as he is generous, Madame;" stammered St. Vallier, at a loss how to reply.

"Oh, yes; he is incapable of treason: I know it, I feel it;" exclaimed Marguerite enthusiastically. "——But whom have we here?"

The person who had attracted the attention of the princess was a courier, who was scouring across the plain at the utmost speed of his horse, and approaching the royal party. As he halted, he delivered into the hands of Bonnivet a sealed packet which was immediately given to the king. The first emotion of Francis was one of impatience at this new intrusion upon his pleasures; but as he read the contents of the paper, a frown gathered on his brow, and his lip blenched. He bent forward at its conclusion, and said a few words in a low tone to Bonnivet, who immediately wheeled his horse to the side of St. Vallier, and said audibly; "Sir, deliver up your sword; I claim it in the name of the king."

For a moment Jean de Poitiers hesitated, but instantly recovering himself, he withdrew his hat with one hand, and with the other presented the weapon, without uttering a syllable.

"Brother, I beseech you, what means this?" asked the duchess, who had suddenly become as pale as death.

"Treason, Madame;" said Francis coldly, as he again moved forward; while Bonnivet, with an escort of armed men, in the midst of whom he placed his prisoner, retraced his steps to Chambord.

Before the return of the hunting party the captain of the king's archers had been conveyed to the dungeons of Loches.

The despatch thus inopportunely received had been forwarded by the Maréchal de Lautrec, who had obtained proofs of the intended treachery of Bourbon, and the complicity of St. Vallier, and who had hastened to apprise the king of the circumstance. The indignation of Francis was extreme; and as he pursued his way, he expatiated bitterly to M. de Savoie, the Marquis de Chabannes, the Duke de Guise, and M. de Montmorenci, who rode beside him, upon the deception which had been practised on him by the duke. "My frankness and plain dealing;" he said angrily; "should have produced more effect; but since he has seen fit to turn traitor, he must abide his fate."

An expedition was immediately despatched against the attainted duke, under the command of M. de Savoie and Chabannes; but he had, meanwhile, entrusted to the Bishop d'Autun a letter to the king, in which he offered to return to his allegiance, on condition that all his forfeited estates should be restored to him, and that none of his friends should suffer for their adherence to his interests. This appeal was, in fact, an open avowal of his contemplated rebellion; and the king's troops, having

encountered the prelate near Lyons, at once seized his person, and forwarded all his papers to Francis; whose utmost indignation was excited no less by the contents than by the tone of the letter, in which Bourbon proposed terms to him rather with the authority of an equal than the deference of a subject.

Information was, however, conveyed to Chantelle by one of Bourbon's agents, of the approach of the royal troops; when the duke saw that he had not a moment to lose unless he would incur the risk of being besieged in his fortress, a hazard of which the result was scarcely doubtful; and he, consequently, took instant measures to effect his retreat. Assuming the livery of M. de Pompérant, and acting as his valet, he left Chantelle without any other attendant, while Montagnac Tauzannes, another of his devoted adherents, put on his own dress, and, mounting his favourite hackney, pursued a contrary route, with three or four followers, in order to deceive the emissaries of the king. Having thus ridden throughout the night without a suspicion on the part of those by whom he was accompanied, that they were not actually escorting their master, Tauzannes found himself compelled, when the day dawned, to dismiss them, after having explained his purpose, and thanked them for the sympathy which they expressed for the misfortunes of their chief; and while silently and sorrowfully they retraced their steps, he pursued his way alone, and proceeded by bye-roads to the Bourbonnais, where he concealed himself, shaved off his hair and his beard, and, disguising himself as a priest, once more set forth to join the fugitive connétable.

The determination of the duke and his companion was,

if possible, to gain Franche Comté; and as it was necessary to adopt every available method of baffling their pursuers, they caused the shoes of their horses to be reversed, and made their way directly towards the frontier. After innumerable dangers, and more than one narrow escape from detection, they reached Auvergne, and thence proceeded by Le Forez and Dauphiny to Savoy, intending to take the post at Chambéry for Italy. This plan proved, however, impracticable, the troops under the Count de St. Pol having crossed the Alps, and occupying the passes; and they were consequently compelled to retrace their steps, and to take refuge at St. Claude, where they were joined by about sixty gentlemen devoted to the interests of the connétable, who had, like himself, succeeded in making their escape. With their assistance he was enabled to raise a small body of horsemen; and thus accompanied, he effected his retreat two months subsequently through Germany to Mantua, where he took up his abode with the marquis, who was his kinsman.

Many of his adherents had been less fortunate. Jean de Poitiers was still a prisoner at Loches, and the Bishop of Autun at Lyons, and Aymard de Prie, François Descars, Seigneur de la Vanguyon, who had married Isabelle de Bourbon-Carency, a relative of the duke; Bertrand Brion, Pierre de Popillon, chancellor of the Bourbonnais; the Count de St. Bonnet, Gilbert Baudemanche, and the Bishop of Puy, were arrested, and put upon their trials as traitors.

This formidable conspiracy created a consternation throughout the whole kingdom, which was heightened by an invasion on the frontiers of Picardy and Cham-

pagne, and the advance of the English and Flemish armies to within eleven leagues of Paris. The Duke de Vendôme, who, despite his relationship with the connétable, had nevertheless continued faithful to the king, and the Marquis de la Tremouille with whom he acted in concert, succeeded, however, in beating back the imperialists; but Francis, finding himself surrounded by peril at home, was reluctantly compelled to abandon for a time his intention of passing into Italy, and was induced to confide the command of that army to Bonnivet.

The next measure of the king was the confiscation of the whole of the estates of the attainted duke, whose adherents were brought to trial before commissioners specially delegated for that purpose; but as their disclosures involved many other individuals, and the affair became every day more complicated, it was ultimately referred to the parliament of Paris. It soon became apparent that the judges placed no faith in the reality of the plot as it had been originally represented to them, but regarded Bourbon as the victim of the duchess-mother, and were inclined to screen the criminals from this conviction; in which they were strengthened by the idle exaggerations of Brian Chabot, who had been sent to the capital by the king immediately after the flight of the connétable, with intelligence of the conspiracy; and who, not satisfied with detailing plain facts, declared that proof had been obtained that its object had been to deliver up Francis to the King of England, to "make mince-meat" of the children of France, to imprison the Duchess d'Angoulême, and to exterminate every branch of the reigning family. The common sense of the parlia-

ment revolted at so improbable a tale; they were aware that Bourbon had many wrongs to avenge, but they remembered that he was a brave man, and not an assassin; and thus the ill-judged eloquence of the favourite made them suspicious, and it was with a decided bias in favour of the accused that they proceeded to the trial.

The Bishop of Puy was unhesitatingly acquitted; for it was shown that although he, as well as the Bishop of Autun, was attached to the household of the duke, they were inveterate enemies who never could have been induced to act in common, and that their jealousies and quarrels had occasionally called for the interference of Bourbon himself. Gilbert de Baudemanche, who was accused of having raised troops in the name of the connétable, brought witnesses to prove that the said troops had been levied for the service of the king. St. Bonnet was also released after a brief examination, during which nothing tended to implicate him; to others were awarded an imprisonment of longer or shorter duration; nineteen, who had effected their escape, were condemned to death by contumacy; and the only rigorous sentences pronounced against any of the accused, were those upon the Count de St. Vallier, and M. de Vauguyon; the first of whom was found guilty of *lèse-majesté*, and condemned to degradation, torture, and ultimately death upon the scaffold; and the latter to the application of "the question;" upon the presumption that being allied to the duke, he must be better informed upon the subject and extent of the conspiracy than his associates. His vehement entreaty, however, that he might lose his head at once, and be

spared the agony of undergoing sufferings which, from his utter ignorance of the whole affair, could lead to no result, induced his judges to grant such a delay as enabled his family to intercede in his behalf; and he was ultimately banished to Orleans for two years, and then obtained a free pardon. The Bishop of Autun was also imprisoned for a time, and after the death of Bourbon reinstated not only in the king's grace, but also in his possessions; and thus the venerable Jean de Poitiers, who, of all his friends, had laboured the most assiduously to dissuade the duke from his rebellion, was the only one of his adherents who was left for execution.

It is asserted that Francis either was, or affected to be, highly displeased at the leniency of the judges toward a crime which not only involved the safety of the country, but even the liberty of the sovereign; declaring that every one of the conspirators richly deserved death, and that he was at a loss to imagine upon what pretext their impunity could be justified. He moreover appointed new commissioners, and once more the whole of the suspected persons were put upon their trial. It would appear, however, that this extraordinary pertinacity upon his part merely served to strengthen the original impression that the hatred of Madame d'Angoulême against the connétable was the real motive of such severity; and, accordingly, the verdict of the second court only tended to ratify that of its predecessor; an obstinacy on the part of the parliament which drew forth a threatening letter from the king; in which he asserted that since they were determined to persist in their error, and to

prefer their own pleasure to the duty which they owed alike to himself and to the nation, he would take such steps as should render them an example to others.

In all probability, however, he became convinced that by this display of temper he had been led into a great and dangerous error; it is at least certain that the letter had no results.

We have already stated that the daughter of St. Vallier had, in her thirteenth year, been given in marriage to Louis de Brézé, Count de Maulevrier, Grand Seneschal of Normandy. The marriage took place in the year 1514, when the bridegroom had already attained the age of fifty-five, and bore about him many honourable scars, which, however they might tend to enhance his glory as a soldier, were by no means calculated to increase his personal attractions in the eyes of a young and beautiful woman. Unfortunately, moreover, Louis de Brézé was perfectly aware of the discrepancies which existed between himself and his bride; but, enslaved by her extraordinary attractions, he had wilfully closed his eyes against the excess of his imprudence, until the fearful jealousy of which he became the victim so soon as he had made Diana his wife, exposed to him the whole extent of his error.

Nor was the home to which he conveyed the new-made countess more consistent with her age and habits than its master. The gloomy castle of Anet, (pompously designated the palace of the kings of Navarre, because the domain had originally formed a portion of the territories appertaining to those sovereigns,) admirably as it was situated in a fertile valley, watered by the rival rivers

of the Eure and the Vesgre, and backed by the magnificent forest of Dreux, was in itself dark, melancholy, and isolated. It consisted of a heavy square mass of masonry, pierced on each of its sides by two rows of lancet windows, deeply sunk in the stone-work; and was flanked at either corner by strong and lofty towers; the whole of the edifice being surrounded by a battlemented wall, and encircled by a moat; and the only mode of access being through the medium of a drawbridge, which communicated with a single entrance gate, opening upon the court within. The interior of Anet was consistent with its outward appearance; dark oaken panellings, grim time-touched portraits of departed worthies, long and chill galleries where the lightest foot-fall awoke mysterious echoes,—these were the unattractive features of the bridal-house of the mere girl whom the grand seneschal had won from her smiling birth-place in Dauphiny.

Diana, who was destined hereafter to play so prominent a part during two successive reigns, was, as we have said, the daughter of the Count de St. Vallier, the representative of one of the most ancient families of Dauphiny, and of Jeanne de Batarnay; and was born on the 3d of September, 1499; while her husband, Louis de Brézé, was the grandson on the mother's side of Charles VII. and Agnes Sorel; a circumstance which at that period was considered greatly to enhance his personal dignity, whatever prejudice might be attached to it in our own times. At the period of her father's condemnation Diana had consequently passed her twenty-third year, but she had spent her early life in an unbroken calm which still invested her with all the charms

of youth and ingenuousness. Looking upon the Count de Maulevrier rather with the respect of a child than the fondness of a wife, she had soon accustomed herself to the gloomy etiquette by which she was surrounded; and knowing nothing of a world of which she was one day to become the idol, she passed her time among her maids, her flowers, and her birds, without one repining thought.

Diana possessed all the graces that attract, and all the charms which enslave. Nature had endowed her alike with beauty and with intellect; and as she moved through the sombre saloons of Anet like a spirit of light, the gloomy seneschal blessed the day upon which he had secured such a vision of loveliness to gladden his monotonous existence.

It may therefore be supposed with what bitter and self-upbraiding reflections he discovered that his betrayal to the king of the treachery of the Duke de Bourbon had involved the life of his father-in-law. Fain would he have concealed such a secret from Diana, but her filial affection rendered the attempt impossible; and little aware of the firm nature of the woman who had hitherto made his will her law, he was astonished to find that, when her first passionate burst of grief had subsided, so far from abandoning herself to a vain and idle sorrow, she wiped away her tears, and declared that his unfortunate revelation must be immediately repaired, and the life of her father saved. In vain did de Brézé represent to her that he had been condemned by the parliament, and that all hope was consequently over. Diana was not to be convinced.

"Tell me not;" she said vehemently; "that there is no remedy. Do you remember, Sir, that should no intercession be made, not only will my father suffer a painful death, but that disgrace will evermore attach itself to the name of our family? He must be saved."

Louis de Brézé shook his head mournfully.

"You would dissuade me in vain;" she persisted; "he must, and he shall be saved."

"But how?"

"I will save him."

"You, Madam! You are not even known at court."

"What care I for that? My misfortunes will at once enable me to take my fitting place. I will throw myself at the feet of the king. He cannot refuse to listen to a child pleading for the life of her father."

"And meanwhile, Diana;" cried the seneschal in a voice of agony; "what will become of *me?*"

"You must pray, Sir: pray that the miserable effects of your mistaken loyalty may be counteracted; pray that the efforts of your wretched wife may be crowned with success. I will not delay a day—not an hour. A head may fall in an instant."

Louis de Brézé was overcome by the energy which she displayed. Hitherto she had been gentle and compliant, but he suddenly found himself overawed by the power of her will, as by something new and strange; and although gloomy forebodings, to which he dared not lend a definite form, arose before him, he suffered her to hasten the preparations for her departure without one effort to impede her purpose.

When the moment came, however, in which she was to leave Anet, the young wife found to her astonishment that she was to set forth alone upon her melancholy mission. "I cannot meet your father;" was the only reason which the count would assign for this singular supineness. "Be speedy in your return, Diana, for you know that the better part of my existence goes with you."

No time was lost upon the road; yet when Madame de Brézé reached the city, the scaffold was already erected upon which her father was to suffer. Unaware, however, of this ghastly fact, she at once sought an audience of the king, who was informed, while surrounded by a bevy of his nobles, among whom he was endeavouring to forget the impending tragedy, that a lady solicited permission to enter his presence.

"Who is she?" he inquired with some curiosity of the usher on duty; "whence does she come?"

"It is the Grande Seneschale of Normandy, Sire; and she has come post from Anet."

"Ah, on the faith of a gentleman!" exclaimed Francis; "she has chosen an unhappy moment to present herself at court. This is the far-famed beauty, Diane de Poitiers, my lords, of whom we have all heard so much, and whom none of us have seen, as I believe, since her childhood. She has come on a woful errand truly, for it is easy to guess the purport of her visit. Admit her instantly."

"The lady is anxious to be permitted to see your majesty alone;" said the usher respectfully.

The monarch glanced rapidly about him with a slight inclination of the head, and in a moment the apartment

was cleared; while as the retreating steps of the courtiers were heard in the gallery, a lateral door fell back, and, closely veiled, and enveloped in a heavy mantle, Diana rushed into the saloon, and threw herself at the feet of the king, screaming breathlessly; "Mercy! mercy!"

"Rise, madame;" said Francis, as the suppliant would have clasped his knees: "remember that you are the wife of a loyal subject, and that your father is very guilty."

"He is old, Sire; he has grown old in the service of his sovereigns;" and as she spoke she raised her drooping head, from which the hood fell back, thus revealing all the beauty of her pale and agonized countenance. "You will not, you cannot allow the memory of a long life of fidelity to be obliterated by one fault. Oh! if you knew how strenuously he exhorted M. de Bourbon not to persist in his error; if you could have seen the brave old man, tortured by premature remorse for his off-falling from his king, and yet shrinking from the accusation that he could abandon his nearest and dearest friend at the moment of peril, you, Sire, you, who know so well how to appreciate all that is great and noble, you would have held him absolved."

"You are an eloquent advocate, madame."

"I am not only pleading for my father, Sire, but for myself; for my own honour, and for the peace of mind of my husband; for surely you cannot have forgotten that the grand seneschal, by revealing the designs of the connétable, involved the safety of him for whom I sue, and that, should he perish, M. De Brézé will have been his murderer!"

"I pity you, madame, from my very heart;" said Francis, as he lifted her from the ground, and placed her upon a seat.

"Do more, Sire;" exclaimed Diana, rising and standing erect, her beautiful figure relieved by the sombre drapery which she had flung aside in the effort. "You are a great and powerful sovereign. Do more. Forget that Jean de Poitiers was the friend of Charles de Bourbon, and remember only that he was the zealous and loyal subject of Francis I. The most noble, the most holy of all royal prerogatives, is mercy."

"Madame ——"

"Ah, you relent! My father is saved!" exclaimed the grande seneschale; "I knew it—I felt it—you could not see those venerable grey hairs soiled by the hands of the executioner."

What more passed during this memorable interview is not even matter of history. The writers of the time put different interpretations upon the clemency of the king. Suffice it that the Count de St. Vallier was reprieved upon the very scaffold; and that Madame de Brézé remained at court, where she became the inspiring spirit of the muse of Clement Marot, who has succeeded by the various poems which he wrote in her honour, and of which the sense is far from equivocal, in creating a suspicion that she was not long ere she became reconciled not only to the manners, but also to the vices of the licentious court, in which thereafter she made herself so unfortunately conspicuous. Some historians acquit her of having paid by the forfeiture of her innocence for the life of her father, from the fact that in the patent by

which his sentence was remitted, no mention is made of her personal intercession, and that his pardon was attributed to that of the grand seneschal himself, and others of his relatives and friends; but it appears scarcely probable that Francis would, under any circumstances, have been guilty of the indelicacy of involving her name in public disgrace, aware, as he necessarily must have been, of the suspicion which was attached to every young and beautiful woman to whom he accorded any marked favour or protection.

Had her after life, moreover, been pure and exemplary, and had she, after obtaining the pardon of her father, withdrawn once more into retirement, posterity would have been at no loss to form a correct and worthy judgment of her conduct; but the vain and willing idol of a depraved poet, and the voluntary seductress of a prince who had scarcely reached half her own age, must be content to leave her memory at least clouded by doubt and darkened by suspicion.

Diane de Poitiers, pleading at the feet of the king for the life of a parent, succeeding in her sublime mission, and subsequently dedicating her youth to the solace of that parent's sufferings, would have ranked among the noblest examples of female virtue and heroism; but Diane de Poitiers, the frivolous votary of courtly pleasures, and the mature mistress of a boy-prince, excites only disgust, distrust, and contempt; and as we trace her downward course, step by step, we scarcely care to ascertain by whom she was first led into the path of evil.

CHAPTER XX.

[1523-24.]

MORTIFICATIONS OF BOURBON—FRANCIS ENDEAVOURS TO RESTORE HIM TO HIS ALLEGIANCE—BOURBON REJECTS HIS OVERTURES—HIS ESTATES ARE SEQUESTRATED—BAD FAITH OF CHARLES V.—JEALOUSY OF THE IMPERIALIST GENERALS—FRANCE ATTACKED ON ALL SIDES—THE DUKE DE VENDÔME RECALLED FOR THE DEFENCE OF PARIS—BRION CHABOT DESPATCHED TO THE CAPITAL TO REASSURE THE CITIZENS—A SECOND GASCONNADE—THE RETORT COURTEOUS—THE ENGLISH TROOPS WITHDRAW FROM FRANCE—DISCONTENT OF THE NATION AT THE APPOINTMENT OF BONNIVET—CONTRAST BETWEEN BOURBON AND BONNIVET AS GENERALS—GALLANT DEFENCE OF CREMONA BY M. D'HERBOUVILLE—DEATH OF THE POPE—PESCARA DRIVEN BACK TO MILAN—BONNIVET BLOCKADES THE CITY—ABLE DEFENCE OF COLONNA—BAYARD DETACHED TO VIGEVANO—BONNIVET RAISES THE SIEGE—DEATH OF COLONNA—DE LAUNOY AND PESCARA ENTER MILAN—ACCESSION OF CLEMENT VII.—BONNIVET APPLIES FOR REINFORCEMENTS—BONNIVET BESIEGES ARONA, BUT IS REPULSED—BAYARD DEFENDS REBEC—IS ATTACKED BY PESCARA AND COMPELLED TO FLY—INDIGNATION OF BAYARD AGAINST BONNIVET—BOURBON DECLINES TO COME TO AN ENGAGEMENT WITH BONNIVET—RETREAT OF THE FRENCH ARMY—BONNIVET IS WOUNDED—BAYARD AND VANDENESSE ASSUME THE COMMAND OF THE TROOPS—VANDENESSE AND BAYARD MORTALLY WOUNDED—THE LAST MOMENTS OF THE GOOD KNIGHT—GRIEF OF THE SOLDIERY—HOMAGE TO HEROISM—A DYING REBUKE—DEATH OF BAYARD—HIS FUNERAL CORTÈGE—REGRETFUL EXCLAMATION OF FRANCIS—A SOLDIER'S MONUMENT.

CHAPTER XX.

[1523-24.]

While the friends of Bourbon were thus suffering the penalties of their adherence to his cause, the duke himself was scarcely more fortunate. He had already experienced with bitterness of feeling, that he was no longer the powerful noble before whom all save royalty bowed down; the idol of the devoted soldiery, and the object of universal popularity. Nothing was left to him but his great name, and the weapon which he had never yet wielded, save in the cause of his country, but which was now to be unsheathed against her; and it is probable that the very excess of his despair rendered him desperate; for Francis, urged, as it is asserted, by his mother, who discovered too late the fatal mistake of which she had been the author, was induced at this period to make a last effort to restore him to his allegiance; and for this purpose commissioned a gentleman of his household to offer to him a free pardon, and the restitution of all his estates and pensions, if he would forthwith acknowledge his error, and return to France.

When he received the royal envoy, Bourbon was surrounded by such of his adherents as had succeeded in effecting their escape; and as he glanced about him, and remembered that for his sake they had been proscribed and condemned, all his original indignation was aroused.

"It is too late, Sir;" he said haughtily; "the king your master had probably forgotten that others have been involved in my misfortune. Do you bring me an assurance of equal impunity for all my gallant friends?"

"I am authorized simply to treat with yourself, my lord duke;" was the reply.

"In that case our interview need not be prolonged;" said Bourbon; "neither do they nor I ask for any favour at the hands of Francis of France. I will not detain you from more urgent duties."

"You are resolved, Monseigneur?"

"You have my answer, Sir."

"I am then compelled to complete my mission, M. de Bourbon, by demanding, in the name of my sovereign, the sword which you bore as Connétable of France, and the collar of St. Michael with which you were invested."

The duke smiled bitterly. "That sword," he said; "I cannot deliver to you. It was taken from me at the passage of the Scheldt, and transferred to the brother-in-law of the king; at his hands therefore you must seek it. The collar of St. Michael must be already in the possession of the sovereign, since I learn that Chantelle has been garrisoned by his troops, and the property found there confiscated to his use. I left it suspended at the head of my bed, and doubtlessly it was found there."

"And this, Monseigneur, is your final answer?"

The connétable bowed in silence, and the royal envoy withdrew.

The total sequestration of Bourbon's estates to the crown followed swiftly upon this ill-ômened interview; he was declared guilty of *lèse-majesté*, and degraded from all his offices and dignities; thus becoming a proscribed and penniless outlaw; while he was made conscious, by the coldness of his new master, of the change which had been effected by this reverse of fortune upon the selfish monarch through whose insidious counsel he had been betrayed.

Charles had believed that by securing Bourbon he should induce a great portion of France to rise against its sovereign, but no such result ensued; and mortified by the disappointment, he forgot the value of the individual in his annoyance at the failure of his hopes. Instead of reiterating the promise which he had made of conferring the hand of his sister upon the duke, and of assisting him to regain his sequestrated estates, he even suffered a considerable time to elapse before he replied to his applications for employment; and when he at length found it expedient to do so, he contented himself by leaving it at his discretion either to return to Spain, or to assume the command of the imperial army in Italy as lieutenant-general; while situated as he was at the moment Bourbon was fain to accept the latter alternative.

The defection of the connétable had meanwhile paralysed the strength of the French army. Suspicions arose among the soldiery that the evil would not end where it had begun. A rallying point was lost; and there was no longer that unity among the troops which had tended

to render them so formidable to their enemies. Nevertheless, by a singular coincidence, the same absence of a settled, or rather simultaneous purpose, proved the salvation of France; for had the several attacks which the king was called upon to repel, been directed at one and the same moment against him, there can be little doubt that he must have sunk under so unequal a conflict. Such, however, was far from being the case; the jealousy that existed between the rival generals, and especially that which Pescara bore to Bourbon, rendered all sincere co-operation impossible; and thus Spain, Germany, and England acted independently, and by this defective policy afforded breathing time to Francis. The Germans were repulsed from Franche-Comté by the Duke de Guise; Lautrec defended Bayonne against the Spaniards during four days, and compelled them to raise the siege, when they fell back upon Fontarabia, which, as we have elsewhere stated, was delivered to them by Captain Franget; a success which did not, however, encourage them to pursue their advantage.

The progress of the English army we have already recorded; and the alarm excited by the approach to the capital was so great that it overcame the mistrust of Francis towards the Duke de Vendôme, whom, as a kinsman of the connétable, he had hitherto feared to invest with an authority which might enable him to assist the fugitive in his supposed designs against Paris. The Duke of Norfolk at the head of fifteen thousand men, had been joined at Calais by the Count de Beaurein; and their combined strength amounted to between six and seven thousand horse, a strong body of artillery, and nearly

thirty thousand foot; while La Tremouille, who was called upon to oppose them, could scarcely muster a sufficient force to garrison his fortresses. The month of September had, however, commenced; and he calculated upon the rainy season which was rapidly approaching, the difficulty which the invading armies must necessarily experience in victualling their troops, and above all on the well-tried valour of his superior officers. Nevertheless, his force was so insufficient for such an emergency, that, according to Du Bellay, he was compelled whenever the enemy withdrew from before a fortified place to remove the garrison into another which was liable to attack.

Under these circumstances Francis recalled the Duke de Vendôme from his government of Champagne to the defence of Paris, at the head of four hundred men-at-arms; and at the same time despatched Brion Chabot to assure the citizens that assistance was at hand. The embassy was precisely one which flattered the vanity of the young count, who, strong in his consciousness of the royal favour, although naturally brave, was arrogant, thoughtless, and self-sufficient; and he had no sooner called a meeting than, omitting altogether to mention the immediate arrival of Vendôme with his troops, he made a flowery harangue, in which he bade the inhabitants of the metropolis divest themselves of all uneasiness, as the king had taken every precaution to ensure the safety of the city, and had sent him to defend it.

Baillet, a shrewd and practical man, who was second president of the parliament, when the young courtier, flushed with his own eloquence paused for a reply, calmly rose, and glancing about him with a look of grave irony,

answered by assuring the royal envoy that he was welcome to the capital as the messenger of their sovereign lord the king, and that there could be little doubt that, should need be, he would demean himself in a manner worthy of his mission; but that, nevertheless, none of his co-citizens could have forgotten that when Louis XI. was anxious to convince his good city of Paris that the invasion of Charles of Burgundy should not affect their safety, he had not sent a solitary courtier by post, but a French marshal with four hundred armed men; a better security than himself, whatever might be his personal qualities, or his court favour, for the preservation of a metropolis; and that, consequently, he felt it incumbent on him to congratulate his fellow-townsmen upon the fact that M. de Vendôme, with a body of troops, was already on the road to reinforce M. de Brion Chabot.

This intelligence soon reached the enemy's camp also; and the English duke, apprehensive that he might be enclosed between the armies of Tremouille and Vendôme, determined on retiring to Calais, the Germans and Flemings having already insisted upon a retreat. He accordingly withdrew by Nesle, Ham, and Bohain, and ultimately sailed for England in the month of December, with a mere skeleton of the fine army which he had led into France, having effected nothing.

We have already stated that the conspiracy of Bourbon had induced Francis to forego his intention of heading his troops in the Milanese, and that he had temporarily confided the command to Bonnivet; who, rash, inconsiderate, and comparatively inexperienced, had only his reckless courage to recommend him. This ill-fated selection

had been made at the suggestion of Madame d'Angoulême, and was intended as the last indignity which she could show to Bourbon; who, considering the favourite as his vassal, would necessarily feel himself outraged by such an arrangement, when France could have opposed him by a Vendôme, a Chabannes, or a Montmorenci.

Its effect was, however, to the full as unfavourable upon the nation at large; the French people, and above all, the French army, had no confidence in the light-hearted and libertine favourite of the duchess-mother; and public opinion seldom errs. His agency had been traced throughout the disgrace of the connétable, not only the first noble, but also the first soldier of France; and while a hope was entertained that the duke, after the bitter paroxysm of his indignation had passed over, might still become reconciled to his sovereign, the more wary of those who watched the progress of events felt a melancholy conviction that should it be otherwise, and Bourbon be indeed induced to bear arms against his country, the contest would be fearfully unequal. Bonnivet had merely the uncalculating courage of a soldier, while Bourbon possessed the tried prudence of a commander; the spoiled favourite was presumptuous, disdaining all advice from those about him, whatever might be the amount of their experience; while the attainted duke sought, on the contrary, for counsel, calculated every chance, was an adept in the whole science of warfare, and was ever ready to profit by any oversight on the part of his adversary. But Bourbon, proscribed and despoiled, now possessed only his proud name and his good sword; while Bonnivet, at

the very moment when his sovereign contented himself by sending a prince of the blood at the head of four hundred men to protect the capital of his kingdom, found himself invested with the command of sixteen hundred lances, the flower of the French cavalry, six thousand Swiss, two thousand troops from the Valais, as many from the Grisons, six thousand lansquenets, three thousand Italians, and twelve thousand French volunteers.

The moment of the invasion was, however, an unpropitious one for France. The solitary fortress which she still possessed, that of Cremona, was garrisoned only by eight brave men, the remnant of a garrison of forty, to whom, under the command of M. d'Herbouville, it had been entrusted eighteen months previously; and who, although they continued to hold the place, had long despaired of help, and been cut off from all communication with their countrymen; while the pope had joined the confederation, believing that he should thus ensure the peace of Italy, and had confided the command of his troops to the Duke of Mantua, who was as anxious as himself to avoid a collision with the enemy.

The sudden death of the pontiff, moreover, which took place on the 14th of September, the very day upon which the campaign commenced, rendered the papal general still more averse to an encounter with the French forces upon his own responsibility; the confederated army was still scattered; while Prosper Colonna, the general-in-chief, who was entrusted with the defence of the Milanese, was a confirmed invalid, and was, moreover, trammelled for want of means to pay his troops. Charles de Launoy,

Viceroy of Naples, who in the event of his demise was to succeed to his command, had halted in the South of Italy, in order not to arouse any suspicion of his purpose; and Pescara, whose jealous animosity towards him no personal success of his own had been able to appease, had left the army for Valladolid, where the emperor was then residing, in order to pour out all his complaints against his rival. Nevertheless, despite extreme old age, bodily suffering, and mental anxiety, Colonna was still true to his reputation; and contrived to harass the enemy, and to impede their progress by all practicable means. As they advanced, although unable to mount his horse, he caused himself to be conveyed in a litter to the bank of the Ticino opposite Vigevano, in order to dispute their passage; but on his arrival there he found that the extreme drought which had prevailed throughout the summer had so decreased the volume of water that the river could be forded from every point; and he was consequently compelled to make a rapid retreat to Milan.

Had Bonnivet pursued his advantage on the instant, there can be little doubt that he might have become master of the city; for thirty years of intermittent warfare had impoverished the citizens, and the walls of the town were still in ruins; while, as we have already stated, the confederated army was dispersed over a large extent of territory. By the forced march of one day the French general might have reached the city; but anxious to convince those who had hitherto accused him of rashness, that he could exert a prudence equal to their own, he lingered for three days on the shores of the Ticino;

and thus gave the imperialist general time to repair his fortifications, and to strengthen his garrison.

Bonnivet was accordingly compelled to have recourse to a blockade; and to attempt, by turning the water-courses and breaking up the roads which led to the city, to reduce the fortress by famine; a stratagem which he followed up by taking Monza, Lodi, and Cremona, the latter town having been in the possession of the Duke d'Urbino while the French held the citadel; thus cutting off the supplies, and exposing the beleaguered city to all the horrors of want. By diverting the canals from their course, and destroying the water-mills in the neighbourhood, the French general had taken the most efficient steps to starve out the garrison; but for a time the want of the former was supplied by the springs within the walls, and that of the latter by windmills which Colonna speedily caused to be constructed; and meanwhile the French troops suffered little less in their own camp, the overflowing of the canals, which broke over their dams and flooded the low grounds about them, and the scarcity of forage for the horses and cattle, rendering it necessary that they should be perpetually on the alert; a circumstance of which Colonna took advantage, by means of skirmishing parties, to harass and fatigue the troops day and night.

So unremitting, indeed, were his attacks—for he had succeeded in collecting within the walls of Milan no less a force than sixteen hundred horse and fourteen thousand foot—that Bonnivet became apprehensive lest he should, in conjunction with Antonio du Leyva, who held Pavia, take possession of a bridge which he had caused to be

constructed at Vigevano, for the convenience of conveying provisions into his camp, and thus starve him in his turn; and he accordingly desired Bayard and the Sire de Rence, who were then holding Monza, to take up their quarters in the village of Vigevano, in order to defend the bridge; a fatal error, of which he was soon destined to appreciate the extent, as Colonna by recapturing the city of Monza was at once enabled to secure an abundance of all the necessaries of life, and to recruit the failing strength of his garrison.

Under these circumstances Bonnivet soon wearied of a warfare which, perilous and fatiguing as it was, conduced to no result; and which was rendered tenfold more trying to his troops from the extreme rigour of the weather, and the perpetual and severe snow storms which for the last four months had almost choked up his camp. He consequently proposed a truce, which however was declined by Colonna; and thus he found himself obliged, on the 27th of November, to strike his tents under the very eyes of the enemy. He nevertheless succeeded in effecting his retreat in good order; and in condensing his troops on an island between the Ticinello and the Ticino, near Biagrasso and Rosat, where he took up his winter quarters, and disbanded a portion of his infantry, which he proposed to replace in the spring by a new levy in Switzerland.

On the 30th of December the brave Colonna breathed his last in Milan, full of years and honour. Although he had already reached the advanced age of eighty, and had long been the victim of a painful and hopeless disease, he had never suffered his spirit to be quenched

by the sufferings of his body; and although both Lannoy and Pescara entered the capital of Lombardy on the very day of his decease, it is questionable whether either, or both combined, could have replaced him.

But, unfortunately for France, private animosity and party feeling had raised up against her a still more formidable enemy; and the ashes of the brave Colonna were scarcely cold in their sepulchre, ere Charles de Bourbon, at the head of six thousand lansquenets whom he had raised in Germany, appeared in the arena. It is true that the coldness of the emperor no longer permitted him to present himself as a prince about to combat for his own interests, and to lend his aid in dismembering the nation, and possessing himself of a separate and independent kingdom; but still his name was a watchword of strength, and his influence over the troops so unbounded, that the pride of Pescara revolted at a rivalry which he had believed must have terminated with the death of Colonna; and nothing short of their common desire to revenge their real or imagined wrongs against France could have induced the two generals to fight under the same banner.

The contest before Milan had not, meanwhile, been the only one which engaged the attention of Europe; the death of Pope Adrian the Sixth having necessitated a new election which convulsed the Vatican with cabals and intrigue. The English ambassadors in Rome had been busy in forwarding the interests of Wolsey, who had also applied to the emperor for his support, and looked with confidence to the result. But Charles, even while he pledged himself to the cardinal to uphold his

pretensions, had private reasons for desiring his failure; and exerted himself so strenuously to secure it, that his name was no sooner mentioned in the conclave than it was unanimously rejected; and after six weeks of agitation and intrigue between the powerful factions of the cardinals of Medicis and Colonna, the election of the former was secured, and he assumed the popedom under the title of Clement VII. Like his predecessor the new pontiff secretly favoured the league, and was desirous for the expulsion of the French from Italy; and thus Francis reaped no benefit from the change which had taken place.

Bonnivet, when once he had secured his winter quarters, so far from feeling his confidence diminished by the check which he had experienced under the walls of Milan, cradled himself in the belief that the arrival of adequate reinforcements from France, and the pecuniary pressure to which the enemy were exposed, must tend to his ultimate success so soon as the rigorous season should be terminated;—but he deceived himself.

Francis, once more satisfied of the immediate safety of his kingdom, had no time to spare from his pleasures, and totally overlooked the precarious circumstances of the absent general; while the appearance of Bourbon with the confederated army tended to condense their measures, and to increase their activity. Moreover, it was essential to Bonnivet that he should maintain a communication with Switzerland and La Valais by means of Lago Majore; and for this purpose he found himself compelled to detach Renzo de Céri, one of the Orsini family, who was a general of the Italian army, with a strong force to besiege Arona, a powerful fortress which defended the

passage between Milan and the Simplon on the western side of the lake. His command consisted of seven thousand of his countrymen, but they were for the most part worn-out veterans, who had wasted their strength in the intestine wars of Italian independence, and who were now brought together under the same banner without a sympathy in common, save that which grew out of the memory that they had each in their turn been indebted for help to the arms of France. These disjointed troops, nevertheless, held out gallantly during the space of thirty days, and harassed the garrison of the place by their indomitable resolution; but at the termination of that period they were driven from their post with considerable loss by Anchiso Visconti, who held the citadel, and compelled them to raise the siege.

The great anxiety of Bonnivet, when foiled upon this point, was to prevent the introduction of provisions into Milan; where he was aware that from the great strength of the garrison, and the multitude of peasantry who had taken refuge within the walls, the consumption must be immense; and having ascertained that supplies not only of food, but also of money, were on their way to the city, he resolved to despatch Bayard to a small village called Rebec for the purpose of intercepting them on their passage. The good knight was never backward where hard blows were to be exchanged, but even he hesitated to undertake so hazardous an enterprise; for Rebec was an open hamlet without walls or defences of any description, and was situated within rifle-shot of the enemy's camp.

"It is to you, my lord of Bayard, that I offer this command;" said Bonnivet courteously; "because it cannot be in better hands than yours. Take with you two hundred horse, and the infantry of Lorges; and we shall be enabled by these means not only to cut off the supplies of the city, but also to obtain unerring intelligence of the movements of the imperialists."

"Both the one measure and the other are desirable no doubt;" was the calm reply of the good knight; "but to effect either I should require the aid of at least a moiety of your whole force. Rebec stands in the midst of the open fields, we have a vigilant enemy to deal with, and our standard will require to be well guarded. Are you prepared to give me the troops I require?"

"Your prudence is ill-timed;" said the arrogant favourite; "Had I not been assured of the perfect safety of the expedition, I should not have devised it. Even now, not a mouse can stir in Milan but I am instantly apprised of its movements. If you decline, however, there are others—"

"Had my personal honour alone been involved in our failure, Monseigneur;" broke in Bayard haughtily; "I should have spared both you and myself so many words; but I fight for France, and her glory is dearer to me than my own. I will, however, since such is your good pleasure, march to Rebec at dawn."

"Do so;" replied Bonnivet; "and within eight and forty hours I will provide you with such a reinforcement as shall form a living citadel in your new government."

"I shall look for it, my lord;" said Bayard coldly; "and will instantly make my preparations."

Accordingly, just as the day broke, the good knight, with a cheerful countenance but a foreboding heart, left Biagrasso at the head of two hundred horsemen and two thousand foot soldiers; but so certainly did he foresee the result of such an improvident enterprise, that he took with him only a second charger, leaving his mules and his baggage at Novara. His first care on arriving in his new quarters was to defend the village in so far as it was susceptible of defence; but when he had ridden through the straggling and unprotected streets and lanes of which it was composed, he found that he could effect nothing beyond erecting barricades at the entrance of the several thoroughfares; and perceiving that in the event of an attack it would be utterly impossible for him to hold out longer than a few hours, he despatched an urgent letter to Bonnivet, describing the extreme peril of his situation, and entreating him not to lose a moment in forwarding the promised reinforcements. But when messenger had succeeded messenger to the main camp, and no answer was returned, Bayard became convinced that he must rely entirely upon his own little band; and a bitter conviction grew upon him that the jeopardy in which he was thus placed had been premeditated. He had long been aware of the jealousy borne towards him by the favourite, by whom the renown of every military leader in the French armies had invariably been considered as a personal injustice; although in the frankness of his nature he had never suffered himself

to suspect that he would be guilty of leading one of his sovereign's officers into an ambush so hopeless as that in which he now found himself entrapped; and he made a solemn vow that should his life be spared he would demand satisfaction at the sword's point.

Days and nights passed on during which the good knight never put off his armour, and even deprived himself of sleep until fatigue had so seriously undermined his health that he could not rise from his bed; and thus found himself constrained to delegate his authority to some of his superior officers. These, however, having since their arrival seen no cause for alarm, proved less stringent than himself, and having satisfied themselves upon their midnight round that all was silent in the enemy's camp, they retired to their quarters, after enjoining the sentinels to vigilance.

The Marquis de Pescara had, meanwhile, ascertained with how small a force Bayard had occupied the hamlet, and resolved to surprise him; while, in order to prevent any mistake during the darkness, his men were instructed to wear their shirts over their armour; and thus, guided by a couple of peasants who were familiar with all the outlets of the village, the Spaniards, to the number of six thousand foot and five hundred horse, moved noiselessly towards Rebec, where all was so silent that for a time they suspected the French troops had retired.

At length, however, they reached the advanced sentinels, who immediately commenced a rapid retreat, raising an alarm as they fell back upon the barricades;

while, as the first cry echoed through the strects, the good knight sprang from his sick-bed, and seizing his lance, rushed towards the barrier, followed by De Lorges and half-a-dozen men at arms, when he encountered a body of the emperor's troops, who were clamorously demanding to be led to his quarters, and offering a reward to whomsoever would enable them to take him. With his own hand, enfeebled as he was by sickness, he overthrew the foremost; upon which his gallant little band, reassured by his sudden apparition among them, seconded him bravely; but he had no sooner ascertained the number of the enemy than he became convinced that all opposition was fruitless; and beckoning De Lorges to his side he bade him instantly retreat with his infantry to Biagrasso.

"Go;" he said rapidly; "save all the lives you can before the whole body of the imperialists pass the barrier. All else must be abandoned; do not lose a moment. I will cover your retreat with my gendarmes; and follow you, should it be God's will."

This order was promptly executed; and while the Italian troops withdrew by an opposite avenue, the good knight and his cavalry so resolutely repulsed the advancing enemy, that they had ultimately time to wheel their horses in their turn towards the main camp, having lost only nine men throughout this gallant defence.

On reaching Biagrasso Bayard at once proceeded to the quarters of Bonnivet, whom he upbraided vehemently for his treachery and bad faith; and the quarrel proceeded to such a length that a personal combat must

have been inevitable, had not the menacing aspect of public affairs induced both leaders to defer for a time the settlement of their private differences.

The imperial army had received a reinforcement of six thousand lansquenets levied by the Venetian states; and Bourbon, who had hitherto been passive, now occupied Milan, and began to act on the offensive. Perpetual skirmishes weakened the ranks of Bonnivet without acquiring for him the slightest advantage; sickness had declared itself among his troops; while the Swiss refused to remain longer partakers of these perpetual and unprofitable disasters, and, according to their usual custom, marched out of the city, and returned home. In this extremity, determined to achieve at least some glory before he abandoned the enterprise upon which he had entered without a single misgiving, Bonnivet made use of every stratagem he could devise for provoking the Duke de Bourbon to an engagement; the haughty connétable, however, disdained to encounter one of whom he still affected to speak as his vassal; and while he pertinaciously harassed his troops by continual sallies, he gave him no opportunity of meeting his own army in the open field.

At length intelligence reached the French camp that six thousand Swiss were marching to their aid by Sessia, and a like number by Bergamo, upon which Bonnivet determined to fall back upon Novara; and he had no sooner accomplished this movement than Bourbon, in order to prevent the junction which it was intended to facilitate, marched his main body to a convenient spot between Sessia and Novara to oppose the passage of the

first, while Giovanni de' Medici crossed the Ticino, and by this movement impeded the progress of the other. In addition to this disaster the French general had no sooner evacuated Biagrasso, the only strong fortress which still remained in his power, than it was besieged and taken by Sforza; nor did the evil end there, for it was discovered that the plague which was raging in the city had extended to his troops, who were daily dying in great numbers, while the scarcity of provisions, from which they had been suffering for several weeks, tended to give added virulence to the disease.

Thus enclosed between two divisions of the hostile army, and disappointed of the anticipated reinforcements, Bonnivet called a council of war, at which it was decided that, as effectual resistance had now become impossible, a retreat should be attempted. In accordance with this arrangement, the French troops left Novara at midnight, and marched upon Romagnano, a hamlet situated upon the left bank of the Sessia; and before daylight they succeeded in passing the river, ere they were overtaken by the enemy. Here they joined their Swiss allies, and then proceeded towards Ivréa, with the intention of entering France by Lower Valais. They had now only ten leagues to march ere they reached a place of safety, and already the flagging spirits of the harassed soldiery began to revive. Bonnivet had, moreover, taken the precaution to erect a field-battery upon the river-bank to impede the passage of the enemy, and great confidence was felt in the sagacity of this arrangement. It proved, however, ineffectual, as the imperialists discovered a ford lower down the stream upon

which the guns could not be brought to bear, and they consequently continued their pursuit without impediment, keeping up a brisk attack upon the rear of the retreating column. Bonnivet, who commanded the rear-guard, returned their fire with considerable effect, and steadily continued his march; while Bayard at the head of his gendarmes maintained a skirmishing warfare, which protected the main body. At length, a musket ball broke the sword-arm of the French general, and compelled him to retire from the hazardous position he had hitherto resolutely held; upon which he summoned to his side the good knight and the Count de Vandenesse, the brother of La Palice:

"I pray and conjure you;" he said to Bayard; "for the sake of your own honour, and the glory of the French name, to defend, as you so well know how to do, the standards which I am now compelled to entrust to your tried valour and fidelity. M. de Vandenesse will command the artillery, but I leave the troops in your charge."

"I thank you, my lord, for the confidence which you express in my loyalty;" replied the good knight; "Had you always done me the same honour heretofore, both my country and my sovereign might have profited by my exertions, and my own safety have been better secured. In any case, however, I shall do my duty; and so long as I have life, our standards shall never fall into the hands of the enemy."

He then assumed the command of the retreating forces; and he had scarcely placed himself at the head of

the gendarmes, when a stone from a hacquebouse[1] struck the Count de Vandenesse, and inflicted a mortal wound, of which he died three days afterwards.

As he fell, Bayard turned upon the enemy, and made so vigorous a charge that he compelled them for a time to retreat upon their main body; but as he was about to rejoin his own force, he was in his turn smitten by a similar missile, which struck him across the loins, and fractured his spine. As he felt the blow, he reeled in his saddle, exclaiming; "Jesus, my God, I am killed!" He then, with some difficulty, raised to his lips the hilt of his sword which was in the form of a cross, kissed it, recommended his soul to God, and fainted. In an instant a dozen hands were outstretched to support him; and while he was led into a place of safety, he rallied, and besought those about him to set him with his back against a tree to which he pointed, and to place him with his face towards the imperialists.

"I feel;" he gasped out; "that I have but a few moments to live, and I will not, for the first time, turn my back upon the enemy. Comrades, to the charge! the Spaniards are advancing. Let me once more see the gleaming of our lances."

The sobs of his maitre-d'hôtel, who was supporting his head, again recalled him to himself. "Jacques, my friend;" he murmured affectionately; "be comforted. It is the will of God that I should now leave this world,

[1] A weapon similar in construction to a harquebuss but of much larger calibre, which launched stones instead of shot.

in which he has blessed me far beyond my deserts. His will be done!"

As no priest was on the field to receive his confession, he sent to summon the Seigneur d'Alegre, the Provost of Paris, whom he entreated to act as his chaplain, and to whom he humbly declared his sins; after which, he besought him to bear his last vows of fidelity to the king his master, and to assure him that the most bitter pang which he experienced in dying existed in the consciousness that he could never again wield a lance in his service.

"And now;" he said, glancing round upon the soldiers who were thronging about him, regardless of the peril by which they were momentarily threatened; "and now, my friends and comrades, leave me, I entreat you; and do not let me suffer the misery of seeing you fall into the hands of your enemies; your care can avail me nothing; —go, and pray for my soul."

For the first time, however, he was disobeyed. Still the imperialists advanced, and still the weeping soldiers stood motionless, gazing upon their expiring idol. Not another blow was struck by the French; and as the enemy came up they heard only one long wail of grief, coupled with the name of Bayard.

Pescara was in the van of the army, and at once apprehending the truth, he made his way to the spot where the good knight was still struggling with the death-agony. As his eye fell upon him, the Spanish general dropped his sword; and then bending down, he raised the hand of his erewhile enemy respectfully to his lips.

"Would to God, my good lord of Bayard;" he said; "that at the cost of a quart of my own blood, so death

had not ensued, I might have met you in good health, and as my prisoner, that so I might have proved how much I honour the exalted prowess that is in you; knowing as I do that the emperor my master has never had a braver or a bolder enemy; and, may God be my help! I would rather have given half of all that I am worth, than that this should have chanced."

As Pescara turned away, the Duke de Bourbon advanced in his turn, and withdrawing his helmet, bent bare-headed over his old companion in arms. "Alas, Bayard!" he said in an accent of deep emotion; "how do I grieve to see you, whom I have always loved and honoured, expiring before my eyes!"

"Monseigneur," replied the good knight, making an effort to subdue the agony under which he writhed; "I thank you for your sympathy, but I desire no pity at your hands; I die like a true man, in the service of my king and my country. Rather save your pity for yourself, who are bearing arms against your faith, your sovereign, and your nation."

Bourbon turned away in silence: the iron had entered into his heart.

During this brief interview Pescara had caused a magnificent marquee to be pitched upon the field, and the wounded man was conveyed upon the crossed lances of some of his own followers to a camp-bed beneath it, beside which he found a priest, to whom he once more confessed himself. The imperialist general then took up his station beside him, and remained at his post, until slightly raising himself upon his pillow, the dying man once more pressed his sword to his lips, and faintly

murmuring his war cry of "God and my country!" sank back, and expired.

A guard of honour was immediately stationed at the entrance of the tent, and the body embalmed; after which all the gentlemen and equerries of his household, who had surrendered on the sole condition that they should be permitted to see him once more before his interment, were indiscriminately admitted, although the same privilege was refused to individuals of higher rank in the opposite army; and as they retired they were severally informed that they were free, as the generals of the emperor had no desire that they should expiate by captivity the performance of a high and sacred duty.

The body of Bayard was then borne to the church by a party of his own gendarmes; and solemn services were performed during two days; after which it was delivered over to the principal officers of his household to be conveyed to the family vault in Dauphiny according to his request. As the funeral procession traversed Savoy, the duke caused similar honours to be shown to the manes of the departed hero as he would have rendered to those of a kinsman; Piedmont paid him the same respect; and in Dauphiny every house was closed, and the belfry of every church rang a burial-peal. But the greatest triumph of the deceased warrior was the mournful cry of the bereaved army; the sob of the scarred veteran in his tent, and the sigh of the ardent young adventurer by the fire of his bivouac. Even the mournful exclamation of Francis, when the fatal news of the death of his famous knight was communicated to him, was less touching; for he thought of himself rather than of his faithful warrior

as he exclaimed: "Alas! I have lost a great captain. He carries with him into the grave many of the brightest jewels which might have been added to my crown."

And the hardy soldiers, seated in groups about their camp-fires, forgot their own prowess—forgot their own renown—and only murmured among themselves when peril was approaching, or honour was to be gained: "Bayard should have been here!—but Bayard is in his grave!"

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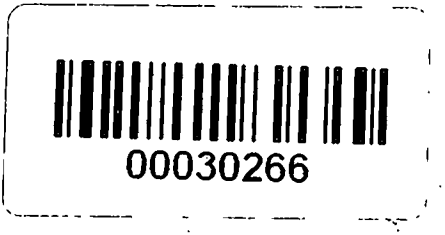
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